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Modern Classics.

CHARLES DICKENS,

BARRY CORNWALL AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS,

By JAMES T. FIELDS.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

By CHARLES DICKENS.

ILLUSTRATED.

PR
4581
F5

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.

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Copyright, 1871 and 1876,
By JAMES T. FIELDS.

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From - Dear brothers -
Dan -

IN AND OUT OF DOORS WITH CHARLES DICKENS.

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DICKENS.

"O friend with heart as gentle for distress,
As resolute with wise true thoughts to bind
The happiest with the unhappiest of our kind."

JOHN FORSTER.

"All men are to an unspeakable degree brothers, each man's life a strange emblem of every man's; and Human Portraits, faithfully drawn, are of all pictures the welcomest on human walls."— CARLYLE.

IN AND OUT OF DOORS WITH CHARLES DICKENS.

MY chair is placed to-day where the portraits of Charles Dickens are easiest seen. These are likenesses of him from the age of twenty-eight down to the year when he passed through "the golden gate," as that wise mystic William Blake calls death. One would hardly believe these pictures represented the same man! See what a beautiful young person Alexander represents in this early likeness of the great author, and then contrast the face with that worn one in the photograph of 1869. The same man, but how different in aspect! I sometimes think, while looking at these two portraits, I must have known two individuals bearing the same name, at various periods of my own life. Let me speak to-day of the younger Dickens. How well I recall the bleak winter evening in 1842 when I first saw the handsome, glowing face of the young man who

was even then famous over half the globe! He came bounding into the Tremont House, fresh from the steamer that had brought him to our shores, and his cheery voice rang through the hall, as he gave a quick glance at the new scenes opening upon him in a strange land, on first arriving at a Transatlantic hotel. "Here we are!" he shouted, as the lights burst upon the merry party just entering the house, and several gentlemen came forward to greet him. Ah, how happy and buoyant he was then! Young, handsome, almost worshipped for his genius, belted round by such troops of friends as rarely ever man had, coming to a new country to make new conquests of fame and honor, — surely it was a sight long to be remembered and never wholly to be forgotten. The splendor of his endowments and the personal interest he had won to himself called forth all the enthusiasm of old and young America, and I am glad to have been among the first to witness his arrival. You ask me what was his appearance as he ran, or rather flew, up the steps of the hotel, and sprang into the hall. He seemed all on fire with curiosity, and alive as I never saw mortal before. From top to toe every fibre of his body was unrestrained and alert. What vigor, what keenness, what freshness of spirit, possessed him! He laughed all over, and did not care who heard him! He seemed like the Emperor of Cheerfulness on a cruise of pleasure, determined to

conquer a realm or two of fun every hour of his overflowing existence. That night impressed itself on my memory for all time, so far as I am concerned with things sublunary. It was Dickens, the true "Boz," in flesh and blood, who stood before us at last, and with my companions, three or four lads of my own age, I determined to sit up late that night. None of us then, of course, had the honor of an acquaintance with the delightful stranger, and I little thought that I should afterwards come to know him in the beaten way of friendship, and live with him day after day in years far distant; that I should ever be so near to him that he would reveal to me his joys and his sorrows, and thus that I should learn the story of his life from his own lips.

About midnight on that eventful landing, "Boz," — everybody called him "Boz" in those days, — having finished his supper, came down into the office of the hotel, and, joining the young Earl of M——, his fellow-voyager, sallied out for a first look at Boston streets. It was a stinging night, and the moon was at the full. Every object stood out sharp and glittering, and "Boz," muffled up in a shaggy fur coat, ran over the shining frozen snow, wisely keeping the middle of the street for the most part. We boys followed cautiously behind, but near enough not to lose any of the fun. Of course the two gentlemen soon lost their way on emerging into Washington from Tremont Street. Dickens kept

up one continual shout of uproarious laughter as he went rapidly forward, reading the signs on the shops, and observing the "architecture" of the new country into which he had dropped as if from the clouds. When the two arrived opposite the "Old South Church" Dickens screamed. To this day I could never tell why. Was it because of its fancied resemblance to St. Paul's or the Abbey? I declare firmly, the mystery of that shout is still a mystery to me!

The great event of Boz's first visit to Boston was the dinner of welcome tendered to him by the young men of the city. It is idle to attempt much talk about the banquet given on that Monday night in February, twenty-nine years ago. Papanti's Hall (where many of us learned to dance, under the guidance of that master of legs, now happily still among us and pursuing the same highly useful calling which he practised in 1842) was the scene of that festivity. It was a glorious episode in all our lives, and whoever was not there has suffered a loss not easy to estimate. We younger members of that dinner-party sat in the seventh heaven of happiness, and were translated into other spheres. Accidentally, of course, I had a seat just in front of the honored guest; saw him take a pinch of snuff out of Washington Allston's box, and heard him joke with old President Quincy. Was there ever such a night before in our staid city? Did

ever mortal preside with such felicitous success as did the younger Mr. Quincy? How he went on with his delicious compliments to our guest! How he revelled in quotations from "Pickwick" and "Oliver Twist" and "The Curiosity Shop"! And how admirably he closed his speech of welcome, calling up the young author amid a perfect volley of applause! "Health, Happiness, and a Hearty Welcome to Charles Dickens." I can see and hear Mr. Quincy now, as he spoke the words. Were ever heard such cheers before? And when Dickens stood up at last to answer for himself, so fresh and radiant, with his beautiful eyes moist with feeling, and his whole frame aglow with excitement, how we did hurrah, we young fellows! Trust me, it *was* a great night; and we must have made a mighty noise at our end of the table, for I remember frequent messages came down to us from the "Chair," begging that we would hold up a little and moderate if possible the rapture of our applause.

After Dickens left Boston he went on his travels, gathering up materials, as he journeyed, for his "American Notes." He was accompanied as far as New York by a very dear friend, to whom he afterwards addressed several most interesting letters. For that friend he always had the warmest enthusiasm; and when he came the second time to America, there was no one of his old companions whom he missed more. Let us read some of these letters

written by Dickens nearly thirty years ago. The friend to whom they were addressed was also an intimate and dear associate of mine, and his children have kindly placed at my disposal the whole correspondence. Here is the first letter, time-stained, but preserved with religious care.

FULLER'S HOTEL, WASHINGTON,
Monday, March 14, 1842.

MY DEAR FELTON: I was more delighted than I can possibly tell you, to receive (last Saturday night) your welcome letter. We and the oysters missed you terribly in New York. You carried away with you more than half the delight and pleasure of my New World; and I heartily wish you could bring it back again.

There are very interesting men in this place, — highly interesting, of course, — but it 's not a comfortable place; is it? If spittle could wait at table we should be nobly attended, but as that property has not been imparted to it in the present state of mechanical science, we are rather lonely and orphan-like, in respect of "being looked arter." A blithe black was introduced on our arrival, as our peculiar and especial attendant. He is the only gentleman in the town who has a peculiar delicacy in intruding upon my valuable time. It usually takes seven rings and a threatening message from —— to produce him; and when he comes he goes to fetch something, and, forgetting it by the way, comes back no more.

We have been in great distress, really in distress, at the non-arrival of the Caledonia. You may conceive what our joy was, when, while we were dining out yesterday, H. arrived with the joyful intelligence of her safety. The very news of her having really arrived seemed to diminish the distance between ourselves and home, by one half at least.

And this morning (though we have not yet received our heap of despatches, for which we are looking eagerly forward to this night's mail), — this morning there reached us unexpectedly, through the government bag (Heaven knows how they came there), two of our many and long-looked-for letters, wherein was a circumstantial account of the whole conduct and behavior of our pets; with marvellous narrations of Charley's precocity at a Twelfth Night juvenile party at Macready's; and tremendous predictions of the governess, dimly suggesting his having got out of pothooks and hangers, and darkly insinuating the possibility of his writing us a letter before long; and many other workings of the same prophetic spirit, in reference to him and his sisters, very gladdening to their mother's heart, and not at all depressing to their father's. There was, also, the doctor's report, which was a clean bill; and the nurse's report, which was perfectly electrifying; showing as it did how Master Walter had been weaned, and had cut a double tooth, and done many other extraordinary things, quite worthy of his high descent. In short, we were made very happy and grateful; and felt as if the prodigal father and mother had got home again.

What do you think of this incendiary card being left at my door last night? "General G. sends compliments to Mr. Dickens, and called with two literary ladies. As the two L. L.'s are ambitious of the honor of a personal introduction to Mr. D., General G. requests the honor of an appointment for to-morrow." I draw a veil over my sufferings. They are sacred.

We have altered our route, and don't mean to go to Charleston, for I want to see the West, and have taken it into my head that as I am not obliged to go to Charleston, and don't exactly know why I should go there, I need do no violence to my own inclinations. My route is of Mr. Clay's designing, and I think it a very good one. We go on Wednesday night to Richmond in Virginia. On Monday we return to Baltimore for two days. On Thursday morning

we start for Pittsburg, and so go by the Ohio to Cincinnati, Louisville, Kentucky, Lexington, St. Louis; and either down the Lakes to Buffalo, or back to Philadelphia, and by New York to that place, where we shall stay a week, and then make a hasty trip into Canada. We shall be in Buffalo, please Heaven, on the 30th of April. If I don't find a letter from you in the care of the postmaster at that place, I 'll never write to you from England.

But if I *do* find one, my right hand shall forget its cunning, before I forget to be your truthful and constant correspondent; not, dear Felton, because I promised it, nor because I have a natural tendency to correspond (which is far from being the case), nor because I am truly grateful to you for, and have been made truly proud by, that affectionate and elegant tribute which —— sent me, but because you are a man after my own heart, and I love you *well*. And for the love I bear you, and the pleasure with which I shall always think of you, and the glow I shall feel when I see your handwriting in my own home, I hereby enter into a solemn league and covenant to write as many letters to you as you write to me, at least. Amen.

Come to England! Come to England! Our oysters are small, I know; they are said by Americans to be coppery, but our hearts are of the largest size. We are thought to excel in shrimps, to be far from despicable in point of lobsters, and in periwinkles are considered to challenge the universe. Our oysters, small though they be, are not devoid of the refreshing influence which that species of fish is supposed to exercise in these latitudes. Try them and compare.

Affectionately yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

His next letter is dated from Niagara, and I know every one will relish his allusion to oysters with wet feet, and his reference to the squeezing of a Quaker.

CLIFTON HOUSE, NIAGARA FALLS,
29th April, 1842.

MY DEAR FELTON: Before I go any farther, let me explain to you what these great enclosures portend, lest — supposing them part and parcel of my letter, and asking to be read — you shall fall into fits, from which recovery might be doubtful.

They are, as you will see, four copies of the same thing. The nature of the document you will discover at a glance. As I hoped and believed, the best of the British brotherhood took fire at my being attacked because I spoke my mind and theirs on the subject of an international copyright; and with all good speed, and hearty private letters, transmitted to me this small parcel of gauntlets for immediate casting down.

Now my first idea was, publicity being the object, to send one copy to you for a Boston newspaper, another to Bryant for his paper, a third to the New York Herald (because of its large circulation), and a fourth to a highly respectable journal at Washington (the property of a gentleman, and a fine fellow named Seaton, whom I knew there), which I think is called the Intelligencer. Then the Knickerbocker stepped into my mind, and then it occurred to me that possibly the North American Review might be the best organ after all, because indisputably the most respectable and honorable, and the most concerned in the rights of literature.

Whether to limit its publication to one journal, or to extend it to several, is a question so very difficult of decision to a stranger, that I have finally resolved to send these papers to you, and ask you (mindful of the conversation we had on this head one day, in that renowned oyster-cellar) to resolve the point for me. You need feel no weighty sense of responsibility, my dear Felton, for whatever you do is *sure* to please me. If you see Sumner, take him into our councils. The only two things to be borne in mind are,

first, that if they be published in several quarters, they must be published in all *simultaneously;* secondly, that I hold them in trust, to put them before the people.

I fear this is imposing a heavy tax upon your friendship; and I don't fear it the less, by reason of being well assured that it is one you will most readily pay. I shall be in Montreal about the 11th of May. Will you write to me there, to the care of the Earl of Mulgrave, and tell me what you have done?

So much for that. Bisness first, pleasure artervards, as King Richard the Third said ven he stabbed the tother king in the Tower, afore he murdered the babbies.

I have long suspected that oysters have a rheumatic tendency. Their feet are always wet; and so much damp company in a man's inside cannot contribute to his pea e. But whatever the cause of your indisposition, we a e truly grieved and pained to hear of it, and should be more so, but that we hope, from your account of that farewell dinner, that you are all right again. I *did* receive Longfellow's note. Sumner I have not yet heard from; for which reason I am constantly bringing telescopes to bear on the ferry-boat, in hopes to see him coming over, accompanied by a modest portmanteau.

To say anything about this wonderful place would be sheer nonsense. It far exceeds my most sanguine expectations, though the impression on my mind has been, from the first, nothing but beauty and peace. I have n't drunk the water. Bearing in mind your caution, I have devoted myself to beer, whereof there is an exceedingly pretty fall in this house.

One of the noble hearts who sat for the Cheeryble brothers is dead. If I had been in England, I would certainly have gone into mourning for the loss of such a glorious life. His brother is not expected to survive him. I am told that it appears from a memorandum found among the papers of the deceased, that in his lifetime he gave away in charity £600,000, or three millions of dollars!

What do you say to my *acting* at the Montreal Theatre? I am an old hand at such matters, and am going to join the officers of the garrison in a public representation for the benefit of a local charity. We shall have a good house, they say. I am going to enact one Mr. Snobbington in a funny farce called A Good Night's Rest. I shall want a flaxen wig and eyebrows; and my nightly rest is broken by visions of there being no such commodities in Canada. I wake in the dead of night in a cold perspiration, surrounded by imaginary barbers, all denying the existence or possibility of obtaining such articles. If —— had a flaxen head, I would certainly have it shaved and get a wig and eyebrows out of him, for a small pecuniary compensation.

By the by, if you could only have seen the man at Harrisburg crushing a friendly Quaker in the parlor door! It was the greatest sight I ever saw. I had told him not to admit anybody whatever, forgetting that I had previously given this honest Quaker a special invitation to come. The Quaker would not be denied, and H. was stanch. When I came upon them, the Quaker was black in the face, and H. was administering the final squeeze. The Quaker was still rubbing his waistcoat with an expression of acute inward suffering, when I left the town. I have been looking for his death in the newspapers almost daily.

Do you know one General G.? He is a weazen-faced warrior, and in his dotage. I had him for a fellow-passenger on board a steamboat. I had also a statistical colonel with me, outside the coach from Cincinnati to Columbus. A New England poet buzzed about me on the Ohio, like a gigantic bee. A mesmeric doctor, of an impossibly great age, gave me pamphlets at Louisville. I have suffered much, very much.

If I could get beyond New York to see anybody, it would be (as you know) to see *you*. But I do not expect to reach the "Carlton" until the last day of May, and then we are going with the Coldens somewhere on the banks of the

North River for a couple of days. So you see we shall not have much leisure for our voyaging preparations.

You and Dr. Howe (to whom my love) MUST come to New York. On the 6th of June, you must engage yourselves to dine with us at the "Carlton"; and if we don't make a merry evening of it, the fault shall not be in us.

Mrs. Dickens unites with me in best regards to Mrs. Felton and your little daughter, and I am always, my dear Felton,

Affectionately your friend,

CHARLES DICKENS.

P. S. I saw a good deal of Walker at Cincinnati. I like him very much. We took to him mightily at first, because he resembled you in face and figure, we thought. You will be glad to hear that our news from home is cheering from first to last, all well, happy, and loving. My friend Forster says in his last letter that he "wants to know you," and looks forward to Longfellow.

When Dickens arrived in Montreal he had, it seems, a busy time of it, and I have often heard of his capital acting in private theatricals while in that city.

MONTREAL, Saturday, 21st May, 1842.

MY DEAR FELTON: I was delighted to receive your letter yesterday, and was well pleased with its contents. I anticipated objection to Carlyle's letter. I called particular attention to it for three reasons. Firstly, because he boldly *said* what all the others *think*, and therefore deserved to be manfully supported. Secondly, because it is my deliberate opinion that I have been assailed on this subject in a manner in which no man with any pretensions to public respect or with the remotest right to express an opinion on a subject of universal literary interest would be assailed in any other country. . . . .

I really cannot sufficiently thank you, dear Felton, for your warm and hearty interest in these proceedings. But it would be idle to pursue that theme, so let it pass.

The wig and whiskers are in a state of the highest preservation. The play comes off next Wednesday night, the 25th. What would I give to see you in the front row of the centre box, your spectacles gleaming not unlike those of my dear friend Pickwick, your face radiant with as broad a grin as a staid professor may indulge in, and your very coat, waistcoat, and shoulders expressive of what we should take together when the performance was over! I would give something (not so much, but still a good round sum) if you could only stumble into that very dark and dusty theatre in the daytime (at any minute between twelve and three), and see me with my coat off, the stage manager and universal director, urging impracticable ladies and impossible gentlemen on to the very confines of insanity, shouting and driving about, in my own person, to an extent which would justify any philanthropic stranger in clapping me into a strait-waistcoat without further inquiry, endeavoring to goad H. into some dim and faint understanding of a prompter's duties, and struggling in such a vortex of noise, dirt, bustle, confusion, and inextricable entanglement of speech and action as you would grow giddy in contemplating. We perform A Roland for an Oliver, A Good Night's Rest, and Deaf as a Post. This kind of voluntary hard labor used to be my great delight. The *furor* has come strong upon me again, and I begin to be once more of opinion that nature intended me for the lessee of a national theatre, and that pen, ink, and paper have spoiled a manager.

O, how I look forward across that rolling water to home and its small tenantry! How I busy myself in thinking how my books look, and where the tables are, and in what positions the chairs stand relatively to the other furniture; and whether we shall get there in the night, or in the morning, or in the afternoon; and whether we shall be able to surprise them, or whether they will be too sharply look-

ing out for us; and what our pets will say; and how they 'll look, and who will be the first to come and shake hands, and so forth! If I could but tell you how I have set my heart on rushing into Forster's study (he is my great friend, and writes at the bottom of all his letters, "My love to Felton"), and into Maclise's painting-room, and into Macready's managerial ditto, without a moment's warning, and how I picture every little trait and circumstance of our arrival to myself, down to the very color of the bow on the cook's cap, you would almost think I had changed places with my eldest son, and was still in pantaloons of the thinnest texture. I left all these things — God only knows what a love I have for them — as coolly and calmly as any animated cucumber; but when I come upon them again I shall have lost all power of self-restraint, and shall as certainly make a fool of myself (in the popular meaning of that expression) as ever Grimaldi did in his way, or George III. in his.

And not the less so, dear Felton, for having found some warm hearts, and left some instalments of earnest and sincere affection, behind me on this continent. And whenever I turn my mental telescope hitherward, trust me that one of the first figures it will descry will wear spectacles so like yours that the maker could n't tell the difference, and shall address a Greek class in such an exact imitation of your voice, that the very students hearing it should cry, "That 's he! Three cheers. Hoo-ray-ay-ay-ay-ay!"

About those joints of yours, I think you are mistaken. They *can't* be stiff. At the worst they merely want the air of New York, which, being impregnated with the flavor of last year's oysters, has a surprising effect in rendering the human frame supple and flexible in all cases of rust.

A terrible idea occurred to me as I wrote those words. The oyster-cellars, — what do they do when oysters are not in season? Is pickled salmon vended there? Do they sell crabs, shrimps, winkles, herrings? The oyster-openers, — what do *they* do? Do they commit suicide in despair, or

wrench open tight drawers and cupboards and hermetically sealed bottles for practice? Perhaps they are dentists out of the oyster season. Who knows?

Affectionately yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

Dickens always greatly rejoiced in the theatre; and, having seen him act with the Amateur Company of the Guild of Literature and Art, I can well imagine the delight his impersonations in Montreal must have occasioned. I have seen him play Sir Charles Coldstream, in the comedy of Used Up, with such perfection that all other performers in the same part have seemed dull by comparison. Even Matthews, superb artist as he is, could not rival Dickens in the character of Sir Charles. Once I saw Dickens, Mark Lemon, and Wilkie Collins on the stage together. The play was called Mrs. Nightingale's Diary (a farce in one act, the joint production of Dickens and Mark Lemon), and Dickens played six characters in the piece. Never have I seen such wonderful changes of face and form as he gave us that night. He was alternately a rattling lawyer of the Middle Temple, a boots, an eccentric pedestrian and cold-water drinker, a deaf sexton, an invalid captain, and an old woman. What fun it was, to be sure, and how we roared over the performance! Here is the playbill which I held in my hand nineteen years ago, while the great writer was proving himself to be as pre-

eminent an actor as he was an author. One can see by reading the bill that Dickens was manager of the company, and that it was under his direction that the plays were produced. Observe the clear evidence of his hand in the very wording of the bill: —

"On Wednesday evening, September 1, 1852.

"THE AMATEUR COMPANY

OF THE

GUILD OF LITERATURE AND ART;

To encourage Life Assurance and other provident habits among Authors and Artists; to render such assistance to both as shall never compromise their independence; and to found a new Institution where honorable rest from arduous labors shall still be associated with the discharge of congenial duties;

"Will have the honor of presenting," etc., etc.

But let us go on with the letters. Here is the first one to his friend after Dickens arrived home again in England. It is delightful, through and through.

LONDON, 1 DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE,
REGENT'S PARK, Sunday, July 31, 1842.

MY DEAR FELTON: Of all the monstrous and incalculable amount of occupation that ever beset one unfortunate man, mine has been the most stupendous since I came home. The dinners I have had to eat, the places I have had to go to, the letters I have had to answer, the sea of business and of pleasure in which I have been plunged, not even the genius of an —— or the pen of a —— could describe.

Wherefore I indite a monstrously short and wildly uninteresting epistle to the American Dando; but perhaps you don't know who Dando was. He was an oyster-eater, my dear Felton. He used to go into oyster-shops, without a farthing of money, and stand at the counter eating natives, until the man who opened them grew pale, cast down his knife, staggered backward, struck his white forehead with his open hand, and cried, "You are Dando!!!" He has been known to eat twenty dozen at one sitting, and would have eaten forty, if the truth had not flashed upon the shopkeeper. For these offences he was constantly committed to the House of Correction. During his last imprisonment he was taken ill, got worse and worse, and at last began knocking violent double-knocks at Death's door. The doctor stood beside his bed, with his fingers on his pulse. "He is going," says the doctor. "I see it in his eye. There is only one thing that would keep life in him for another hour, and that is oysters." They were immediately brought. Dando swallowed eight, and feebly took a ninth. He held it in his mouth and looked round the bed strangely. "Not a bad one, is it?" says the doctor. The patient shook his head, rubbed his trembling hand upon his stomach, bolted the oyster, and fell back — dead. They buried him in the prison yard, and paved his grave with oyster-shells.

We are all well and hearty, and have already begun to wonder what time next year you and Mrs. Felton and Dr. Howe will come across the briny sea together. To-morrow we go to the seaside for two months. I am looking out for news of Longfellow, and shall be delighted when I know that he is on his way to London and this house.

I am bent upon striking at the piratical newspapers with the sharpest edge I can put upon my small axe, and hope in the next session of Parliament to stop their entrance into Canada. For the first time within the memory of man, the professors of English literature seem disposed to act together on this question. It is a good thing to aggravate a scoundrel,

if one can do nothing else, and I think we *can* make them smart a little in this way. . . . .

I wish you had been at Greenwich the other day, where a party of friends gave me a private dinner; public ones I have refused. C. was perfectly wild at the reunion, and, after singing all manner of marine songs, wound up the entertainment by coming home (six miles) in a little open phaeton of mine, *on his head*, to the mingled delight and indignation of the metropolitan police. We were very jovial indeed; and I assure you that I drank your health with fearful vigor and energy.

On board that ship coming home I established a club, called the United Vagabonds, to the large amusement of the rest of the passengers. This holy brotherhood committed all kinds of absurdities, and dined always, with a variety of solemn forms, at one end of the table, below the mast, away from all the rest. The captain being ill when we were three or four days out, I produced my medicine-chest and recovered him. We had a few more sick men after that, and I went round "the wards" every day in great state, accompanied by two Vagabonds, habited as Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer, bearing enormous rolls of plaster and huge pairs of scissors. We were really very merry all the way, breakfasted in one party at Liverpool, shook hands, and parted most cordially. . . . .

Affectionately

Your faithful friend,

C. D.

P. S. I have looked over my journal, and have decided to produce my American trip in two volumes. I have written about half the first since I came home, and hope to be out in October. This is "exclusive news," to be communicated to any friends to whom you may like to intrust it, my dear F.

What a capital epistolary pen Dickens held! He seems never to have written the shortest note with-

out something piquant in it; and when he attempted a *letter*, he always made it entertaining from sheer force of habit.

When I think of this man, and all the lasting good and abounding pleasure he has brought into the world, I wonder at the superstition that dares to arraign him. A sound philosopher once said: "He that thinks any innocent pastime foolish has either to grow wiser, or is past the ability to do so"; and I have always counted it an impudent fiction that playfulness is inconsistent with greatness. Many men and women have died of Dignity, but the disease which sent them to the tomb was not contracted from Charles Dickens. Not long ago, I met in the street a bleak old character, full of dogmatism, egotism, and rheumatism, who complained that Dickens had "too much exuberant sociality" in his books for *him*, and he wondered how any one could get through Pickwick. My solemn friend evidently preferred the dropping-down-deadness of manner, which he had been accustomed to find in Hervey's "Meditations," and other kindred authors, where it always seems to be urged that life would be endurable but for its pleasures. A person once commended to my acquaintance an individual whom he described as "a fine, pompous, gentlemanly man," and I thought it prudent, under the circumstances, to decline the proffered introduction.

But I will proceed with those outbursts of bright-heartedness vouchsafed to us in Dickens's letters. To me these epistles are good as fresh "Uncommercials," or unpublished "Sketches by Boz."

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park,
London, 1st September, 1842.

My dear Felton: Of course that letter in the papers was as foul a forgery as ever felon swung for. . . . . I have not contradicted it publicly, nor shall I. When I tilt at such wringings out of the dirtiest mortality, I shall be another man — indeed, almost the creature they would make me.

I gave your message to Forster, who sends a despatch-box full of kind remembrances in return. He is in a great state of delight with the first volume of my American book (which I have just finished), and swears loudly by it. It is *True*, and Honorable I know, and I shall hope to send it you, complete, by the first steamer in November.

Your description of the porter and the carpet-bags prepares me for a first-rate facetious novel, brimful of the richest humor, on which I have no doubt you are engaged. What is it called? Sometimes I imagine the title-page thus: —

OYSTERS
IN
EVERY STYLE
OR
OPENINGS
OF
LIFE
BY
YOUNG DANDO.

As to the man putting the luggage on his head, as a sort of sign, I adopt it from this hour.

I date this from London, where I have come, as a good, profligate, graceless bachelor, for a day or two; leaving my wife and babbies at the seaside. . . . . Heavens! if you were but here at this minute! A piece of salmon and a steak are cooking in the kitchen; it 's a very wet day, and I have had a fire lighted; the wine sparkles on a side-table; the room looks the more snug from being the only *un*dismantled one in the house; plates are warming for Forster and Maclise, whose knock I am momentarily expecting; that groom I told you of, who never comes into the house, except when we are all out of town, is walking about in his shirt-sleeves without the smallest consciousness of impropriety; a great mound of proofs are waiting to be read aloud, after dinner. With what a shout I would clap you down into the easiest chair, my genial Felton, if you could but appear, and order you a pair of slippers instantly!

Since I have written this, the aforesaid groom — a very small man (as the fashion is), with fiery-red hair (as the fashion is *not*) — has looked very hard at me and fluttered about me at the same time, like a giant butterfly. After a pause, he says, in a Sam Wellerish kind of way: "I vent to the club this mornin', sir. There vorn't no letters, sir." "Very good, Topping." "How 's missis, sir?" "Pretty well, Topping." "Glad to hear it, sir. *My* missis ain't wery well, sir." "No!" "No, sir, she 's a goin', sir, to have a hincrease wery soon, and it makes her rather nervous, sir; and ven a young voman gets at all down at sich a time, sir, she goes down wery deep, sir." To this sentiment I replied affirmatively, and then he adds, as he stirs the fire (as if he were thinking out loud), "Wot a mystery it is! Wot a go is natur'!" With which scrap of philosophy, he gradually gets nearer to the door, and so fades out of the room.

This same man asked me one day, soon after I came home, what Sir John Wilson was. This is a friend of mine, who took our house and servants, and everything as it stood,

during our absence in America. I told him an officer. "A wot, sir?" "An officer." And then, for fear he should think I meant a police-officer, I added, "An officer in the army." "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, touching his hat, "but the club as I always drove him to wos the United Servants."

The real name of this club is the United Service, but I have no doubt he thought it was a high-life-below-stairs kind of resort, and that this gentleman was a retired butler or superannuated footman.

There 's the knock, and the Great Western sails, or steams rather, to-morrow. Write soon again, dear Felton, and ever believe me, ...

Your affectionate friend,

CHARLES DICKENS.

P. S. All good angels prosper Dr. Howe. He, at least, will not like me the less, I hope, for what I shall say of Laura.

LONDON, 1 DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE,
REGENT'S PARK, 31st December, 1842.

MY DEAR FELTON: Many and many happy New Years to you and yours! As many happy children as may be quite convenient (no more)! and as many happy meetings between them and our children, and between you and us, as the kind fates in their utmost kindness shall favorably decree!

The American book (to begin with that) has been a most complete and thorough-going success. Four large editions have now been sold *and paid for*, and it has won golden opinions from all sorts of men, except our friend in F——, who is a miserable creature; a disappointed man in great poverty, to whom I have ever been most kind and considerate (I need scarcely say that); and another friend in B——, no less a person than an illustrious gentleman named ——, who wrote a story called ——. They have done no harm, and have fallen short of their mark, which, of course, was

to annoy me. Now I am perfectly free from any diseased curiosity in such respects, and whenever I hear of a notice of this kind, I never read it; whereby I always conceive (don't you?) that I get the victory. With regard to your slave-owners, they may cry, till they are as black in the face as their own slaves, that Dickens lies. Dickens does not write for their satisfaction, and Dickens will not explain for their comfort. Dickens has the name and date of every newspaper in which every one of those advertisements appeared, as they know perfectly well; but Dickens does not choose to give them, and will not at any time between this and the day of judgment. . . . .

I have been hard at work on my new book, of which the first number has just appeared. The Paul Joneses who pursue happiness and profit at other men's cost will no doubt enable you to read it, almost as soon as you receive this. I hope you will like it. And I particularly commend, my dear Felton, one Mr. Pecksniff and his daughters to your tender regards. I have a kind of liking for them myself.

Blessed star of morning, such a trip as we had into Cornwall, just after Longfellow went away! The "we" means Forster, Maclise, Stanfield (the renowned marine painter), and the Inimitable Boz. We went down into Devonshire by the railroad, and there we hired an open carriage from an innkeeper, patriotic in all Pickwick matters, and went on with post horses. Sometimes we travelled all night, sometimes all day, sometimes both. I kept the joint-stock purse, ordered all the dinners, paid all the turnpikes, conducted facetious conversations with the post-boys, and regulated the pace at which we travelled. Stanfield (an old sailor) consulted an enormous map on all disputed points of wayfaring; and referred, moreover, to a pocket-compass and other scientific instruments. The luggage was in Forster's department; and Maclise, having nothing particular to do, sang songs. Heavens! If you could have seen the necks of bottles — distracting in their immense

varieties of shape — peering out of the carriage pockets! If you could have witnessed the deep devotion of the post-boys, the wild attachment of the hostlers, the maniac glee of the waiters! If you could have followed us into the earthy old churches we visited, and into the strange caverns on the gloomy sea-shore, and down into the depths of mines, and up to the tops of giddy heights where the unspeakably green water was roaring, I don't know how many hundred feet below! If you could have seen but one gleam of the bright fires by which we sat in the big rooms of ancient inns at night, until long after the small hours had come and gone, or smelt but one steam of the HOT punch (not white, dear Felton, like that amazing compound I sent you a taste of, but a rich, genial, glowing brown) which came in every evening in a huge broad china bowl! I never laughed in my life as I did on this journey. It would have done you good to hear me. I was choking and gasping and bursting the buckle off the back of my stock, all the way. And Stanfield (who is very much of your figure and temperament, but fifteen years older) got into such apoplectic entanglements that we were often obliged to beat him on the back with portmanteaus before we could recover him. Seriously, I do believe there never was such a trip. And they made such sketches, those two men, in the most romantic of our halting-places, that you would have sworn we had the Spirit of Beauty with us, as well as the Spirit of Fun. But stop till you come to England, — I say no more.

The actuary of the national debt could n't calculate the number of children who are coming here on Twelfth Night, in honor of Charley's birthday, for which occasion I have provided a magic lantern and divers other tremendous engines of that nature. But the best of it is that Forster and I have purchased between us the entire stock in trade of a conjurer, the practice and display whereof is intrusted to me. And O my dear eyes, Felton, if you could see me conjuring the company's watches into impossible tea-caddies, and causing pieces of money to fly, and burning pocket-

handkerchiefs without hurting 'em, and practising in my own room, without anybody to admire, you would never forget it as long as you live. In those tricks which require a confederate, I am assisted (by reason of his imperturbable good-humor) by Stanfield, who always does his part exactly the wrong way, to the unspeakable delight of all beholders. We come out on a small scale, to-night, at Forster's, where we see the old year out and the new one in. Particulars of shall be forwarded in my next.

I have quite made up my mind that F—— really believes he *does* know you personally, and has all his life. He talks to me about you with such gravity that I am afraid to grin, and feel it necessary to look quite serious. Sometimes he *tells* me things about you, does n't ask me, you know, so that I am occasionally perplexed beyond all telling, and begin to think it was he, and not I, who went to America. It 's the queerest thing in the world.

The book I was to have given Longfellow for you is not worth sending by itself, being only a Barnaby. But I will look up some manuscript for you (I think I have that of the American Notes complete), and will try to make the parcel better worth its long conveyance. With regard to Maclise's pictures, you certainly are quite right in your impression of them; but he is "such a discursive devil" (as he says about himself) and flies off at such odd tangents, that I feel it difficult to convey to you any general notion of his purpose. I will try to do so when I write again. I want very much to know about —— and that charming girl. . . . . Give me full particulars. Will you remember me cordially to Sumner, and say I thank him for his welcome letter? The like to Hillard, with many regards to himself and his wife, with whom I had one night a little conversation which I shall not readily forget. The like to Washington Allston, and all friends who care for me and have outlived my book. . . . . Always, my dear Felton,

With true regard and affection, yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

Here is a letter that seems to me something tremendous in its fun and pathos: —

1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park,
London, 2d March, 1843.

My dear Felton: I don't know where to begin, but plunge headlong with a terrible splash into this letter, on the chance of turning up somewhere.

Hurrah! Up like a cork again, with the "North American Review" in my hand. Like you, my dear ——, and I can say no more in praise of it, though I go on to the end of the sheet. You cannot think how much notice it has attracted here. Brougham called the other day, with the number (thinking I might not have seen it), and I being out at the time, he left a note, speaking of it, and of the writer, in terms that warmed my heart. Lord Ashburton (one of whose people wrote a notice in the "Edinburgh," which they have since publicly contradicted) also wrote to me about it in just the same strain. And many others have done the like.

I am in great health and spirits and powdering away at Chuzzlewit, with all manner of facetiousness rising up before me as I go on. As to news, I have really none, saving that —— (who never took any exercise in his life) has been laid up with rheumatism for weeks past, but is now, I hope, getting better. My little captain, as I call him, — he who took me out, I mean, and with whom I had that adventure of the cork soles, — has been in London too, and seeing all the lions under my escort. Good heavens! I wish you could have seen certain other mahogany-faced men (also captains) who used to call here for him in the morning, and bear him off to docks and rivers and all sorts of queer places, whence he always returned late at night, with rum-and-water tear-drops in his eyes, and a complication of punchy smells in his mouth! He was better than a comedy to us, having marvellous ways of tying his pocket-handker-

chief round his neck at dinner-time in a kind of jolly embarrassment, and then forgetting what he had done with it; also of singing songs to wrong tunes, and calling land objects by sea names, and never knowing what o'clock it was, but taking midnight for seven in the evening; with many other sailor oddities, all full of honesty, manliness, and good temper. We took him to Drury Lane Theatre to see Much Ado About Nothing. But I never could find out what he meant by turning round, after he had watched the first two scenes with great attention, and inquiring "whether it was a Polish piece." . . . .

On the 4th of April I am going to preside at a public dinner for the benefit of the printers; and if you were a guest at that table, would n't I smite you on the shoulder, harder than ever I rapped the well-beloved back of Washington Irving at the City Hotel in New York!

You were asking me — I love to say asking, as if we could talk together — about Maclise. He is such a discursive fellow, and so eccentric in his might, that on a mental review of his pictures I can hardly tell you of them as leading to any one strong purpose. But the annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy comes off in May, and then I will endeavor to give you some notion of him. He is a tremendous creature, and might do anything. But, like all tremendous creatures, he takes his own way, and flies off at unexpected breaches in the conventional wall.

You know H——'s Book, I daresay. Ah! I saw a scene of mingled comicality and seriousness at his funeral some weeks ago, which has choked me at dinner-time ever since. C—— and I went as mourners; and as he lived, poor fellow, five miles out of town, I drove C—— down. It was such a day as I hope, for the credit of nature, is seldom seen in any parts but these, — muddy, foggy, wet, dark, cold, and unutterably wretched in every possible respect. Now, C—— has enormous whiskers, which straggle all down his throat in such weather, and stick out in front of him, like a partially unravelled bird's-nest; so that he

looks queer enough at the best, but when he is very wet, and in a state between jollity (he is always very jolly with me) and the deepest gravity (going to a funeral, you know), it is utterly impossible to resist him; especially as he makes the strangest remarks the mind of man can conceive, without any intention of being funny, but rather meaning to be philosophical. I really cried with an irresistible sense of his comicality all the way; but when he was dressed out in a black cloak and a very long black hat-band by an undertaker (who, as he whispered me with tears in his eyes — for he had known H—— many years — was "a character, and he would like to sketch him"), I thought I should have been obliged to go away. However, we went into a little parlor where the funeral party was, and God knows it was miserable enough, for the widow and children were crying bitterly in one corner, and the other mourners — mere people of ceremony, who cared no more for the dead man than the hearse did — were talking quite coolly and carelessly together in another; and the contrast was as painful and distressing as anything I ever saw. There was an independent clergyman present, with his bands on and a Bible under his arm, who, as soon as we were seated, addressed —— thus, in a loud, emphatic voice: "Mr. C——, have you seen a paragraph respecting our departed friend, which has gone the round of the morning papers?" "Yes, sir," says C——, "I have," looking very hard at me the while, for he had told me with some pride coming down that it was his composition. "Oh!" said the clergyman. "Then you will agree with me, Mr. C——, that it is not only an insult to me, who am the servant of the Almighty, but an insult to the Almighty, whose servant I am." "How is that, sir?" said C——. "It is stated, Mr. C——, in that paragraph," says the minister, "that when Mr. H—— failed in business as a bookseller, he was persuaded by *me* to try the pulpit, which is false, incorrect, unchristian, in a manner blasphemous, and in all respects contemptible. Let us pray." With which, my dear Felton, and in the same breath, I give you

my word, he knelt down, as we all did, and began a very miserable jumble of an extemporary prayer. I was really penetrated with sorrow for the family, but when C—— (upon his knees, and sobbing for the loss of an old friend) whispered me, "that if that was n't a clergyman, and it was n't a funeral, he 'd have punched his head," I felt as if nothing but convulsions could possibly relieve me. . . . .

Faithfully always, my dear Felton,

C. D.

Was there ever such a genial, jovial creature as this master of humor! When we read his friendly epistles, we cannot help wishing he had written letters only, as when we read his novels we grudge the time he employed on anything else.

BROADSTAIRS, KENT, 1st September, 1843.

MY DEAR FELTON: If I thought it in the nature of things that you and I could ever agree on paper, touching a certain Chuzzlewitian question whereupon F—— tells me you have remarks to make, I should immediately walk into the same, tooth and nail. But as I don't, I won't. Contenting myself with this prediction, that one of these years and days, you will write or say to me, "My dear Dickens, you were right, though rough, and did a world of good, though you got most thoroughly hated for it." To which I shall reply, "My dear Felton, I looked a long way off and not immediately under my nose." . . . At which sentiment you will laugh, and I shall laugh; and then (for I foresee this will all happen in my land) we shall call for another pot of porter and two or three dozen of oysters.

Now don't you in your own heart and soul quarrel with me for this long silence? Not half so much as I quarrel with myself, I know; but if you could read half the letters I write to you in imagination, you would swear by me for

the best of correspondents. The truth is, that when I have done my morning's work, down goes my pen, and from that minute I feel it a positive impossibility to take it up again, until imaginary butchers and bakers wave me to my desk. I walk about brimful of letters, facetious descriptions, touching morsels, and pathetic friendships, but can't for the soul of me uncork myself. The post-office is my rock ahead. My average number of letters that *must* be written every day is, at the least, a dozen. And you could no more know what I was writing to you spiritually, from the perusal of the bodily thirteenth, than you could tell from my hat what was going on in my head, or could read my heart on the surface of my flannel waistcoat.

This is a little fishing-place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff whereon — in the centre of a tiny semicircular bay — our house stands; the sea rolling and dashing under the windows. Seven miles out are the Goodwin Sands, (you 've heard of the Goodwin Sands?) whence floating lights perpetually wink after dark, as if they were carrying on intrigues with the servants. Also there is a big lighthouse called the North Foreland on a hill behind the village, a severe parsonic light, which reproves the young and giddy floaters, and stares grimly out upon the sea. Under the cliff are rare good sands, where all the children assemble every morning and throw up impossible fortifications, which the sea throws down again at high water. Old gentlemen and ancient ladies flirt after their own manner in two reading-rooms and on a great many scattered seats in the open air. Other old gentlemen look all day through telescopes and never see anything. In a bay-window in a one pair sits from nine o'clock to one a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. At one he disappears, and presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen — a kind of salmon-colored porpoise — splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be seen in another bay-window on the ground-floor, eating a strong

lunch; after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book. Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He 's as brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumor. Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles, or so, away), and then I 'm told there is a sound in Lincoln Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wineglasses.

I never shall have been so near you since we parted aboard the George Washington as next Tuesday. Forster, Maclise, and I, and perhaps Stanfield, are then going aboard the Cunard steamer at Liverpool, to bid Macready good by, and bring his wife away. It will be a very hard parting. You will see and know him of course. We gave him a splendid dinner last Saturday at Richmond, whereat I presided with my accustomed grace. He is one of the noblest fellows in the world, and I would give a great deal that you and I should sit beside each other to see him play Virginius, Lear, or Werner, which I take to be, every way, the greatest piece of exquisite perfection that his lofty art is capable of attaining. His Macbeth, especially the last act, is a tremendous reality; but so indeed is almost everything he does. You recollect, perhaps, that he was the guardian of our children while we were away. I love him dearly. . . . .

You asked me, long ago, about Maclise. He is such a wayward fellow in his subjects, that it would be next to impossible to write such an article as you were thinking of about him. I wish you could form an idea of his genius. One of these days a book will come out, "Moore's Irish Melodies," entirely illustrated by him, on every page. *When* it comes, I 'll send it to you. You will have some notion of him then. He is in great favor with the queen, and paints secret pictures for her to put upon her husband's table on the morning of his birthday, and the like. But if he has a

care, he will leave his mark on more enduring things than palace walls.

And so L—— is married. I remember *her* well, and could draw her portrait, in words, to the life. A very beautiful and gentle creature, and a proper love for a poet. My cordial remembrances and congratulations. Do they live in the house where we breakfasted? . . . .

I very often dream I am in America again; but, strange to say, I never dream of you. I am always endeavoring to get home in disguise, and have a dreary sense of the distance. *Apropos* of dreams, is it not a strange thing if writers of fiction never dream of their own creations; recollecting, I suppose, even in their dreams, that they have no real existence? *I* never dreamed of any of my own characters, and I feel it so impossible that I would wager Scott never did of his, real as they are. I had a good piece of absurdity in my head a night or two ago. I dreamed that somebody was dead. I don't know who, but it 's not to the purpose. It was a private gentleman, and a particular friend; and I was greatly overcome when the news was broken to me (very delicately) by a gentleman in a cocked hat, top boots, and a sheet. Nothing else. "Good God!" I said, "is he dead?" "He is as dead, sir," rejoined the gentleman, "as a door-nail. But we must all die, Mr. Dickens; sooner or later, my dear sir." "Ah!" I said. "Yes, to be sure. Very true. But what did he die of?" The gentleman burst into a flood of tears, and said, in a voice broken by emotion, "He christened his youngest child, sir, with a toasting-fork." I never in my life was so affected as at his having fallen a victim to this complaint. It carried a conviction to my mind that he never could have recovered. I knew that it was the most interesting and fatal malady in the world; and I wrung the gentleman's hand in a convulsion of respectful admiration, for I felt that this explanation did equal honor to his head and heart!

What do you think of Mrs. Gamp? And how do you like the undertaker? I have a fancy that they are in your

way. O heaven! such green woods as I was rambling among down in Yorkshire, when I was getting that done last July! For days and weeks we never saw the sky but through green boughs; and all day long I cantered over such soft moss and turf, that the horse's feet scarcely made a sound upon it. We have some friends in that part of the country (close to Castle Howard, where Lord Morpeth's father dwells in state, *in* his park indeed), who are the jolliest of the jolly, keeping a big old country house, with an ale cellar something larger than a reasonable church, and everything like Goldsmith's bear dances, "in a concatenation accordingly." Just the place for you, Felton! We performed some madnesses there in the way of forfeits, picnics, rustic games, inspections of ancient monasteries at midnight, when the moon was shining, that would have gone to your heart, and, as Mr. Weller says, "come out on the other side." . . . .

Write soon, my dear Felton; and if I write to you less often than I would, believe that my affectionate heart is with you always. Loves and regards to all friends, from yours ever and ever,

CHARLES DICKENS.

These letters grow better and better as we get on. Ah me! and to think we shall have no more from that delightful pen!

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, LONDON, January 2, 1844.

MY VERY DEAR FELTON: You are a prophet, and had best retire from business straightway. Yesterday morning, New Year's day, when I walked into my little workroom after breakfast, and was looking out of window at the snow in the garden, — not seeing it particularly well in consequence of some staggering suggestions of last night, whereby I was beset, — the postman came to the door with a knock, for which I denounced him from my heart. Seeing

your hand upon the cover of a letter which he brought, I immediately blessed him, presented him with a glass of whiskey, inquired after his family (they are all well), and opened the despatch with a moist and oystery twinkle in my eye. And on the very day from which the new year dates, I read your New Year congratulations as punctually as if you lived in the next house. Why don't you?

Now, if instantly on the receipt of this you will send a free and independent citizen down to the Cunard wharf at Boston, you will find that Captain Hewett, of the Britannia steamship (my ship), has a small parcel for Professor Felton of Cambridge; and in that parcel you will find a Christmas Carol in prose; being a short story of Christmas by Charles Dickens. Over which Christmas Carol Charles Dickens wept and laughed and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London, fifteen and twenty miles, many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed. . . . . Its success is most prodigious. And by every post all manner of strangers write all manner of letters to him about their homes and hearths, and how this same Carol is read aloud there, and kept on a little shelf by itself. Indeed, it is the greatest success, as I am told, that this ruffian and rascal has ever achieved.

Forster is out again; and if he don't go in again, after the manner in which we have been keeping Christmas, he must be very strong indeed. Such dinings, such dancings, such conjurings, such blindman's-buffings, such theatre-goings, such kissings-out of old years and kissings-in of new ones, never took place in these parts before. To keep the Chuzzlewit going, and do this little book, the Carol, in the odd times between two parts of it, was, as you may suppose, pretty tight work. But when it was done I broke out like a madman. And if you could have seen me at a children's party at Macready's the other night, going down a country dance with Mrs. M., you would have thought I was a country gentleman of independent property, residing on a tiptop

farm, with the wind blowing straight in my face every day. . . . .

Your friend, Mr. P——, dined with us one day (I don't know whether I told you this before), and pleased us very much. Mr. C—— has dined here once, and spent an evening here. I have not seen him lately, though he has called twice or thrice; for K—— being unwell and I busy, we have not been visible at our accustomed seasons. I wonder whether H—— has fallen in your way. Poor H——! He was a good fellow, and has the most grateful heart I ever met with. Our journeyings seem to be a dream now. Talking of dreams, strange thoughts of Italy and France, and maybe Germany, are springing up within me as the Chuzzlewit clears off. It 's a secret I have hardly breathed to any one, but I "think" of leaving England for a year, next midsummer, bag and baggage, little ones and all, — then coming out with *such* a story, Felton, all at once, no parts, sledge-hammer blow.

I send you a Manchester paper, as you desire. The report is not exactly done, but very well done, notwithstanding. It was a very splendid sight, I assure you, and an awful-looking audience. I am going to preside at a similar meeting at Liverpool on the 26th of next month, and on my way home I may be obliged to preside at another at Birmingham. I will send you papers, if the reports be at all like the real thing.

I wrote to Prescott about his book, with which I was perfectly charmed. I think his descriptions masterly, his style brilliant, his purpose manly and gallant always. The introductory account of Aztec civilization impressed me exactly as it impressed you. From beginning to end, the whole history is enchanting and full of genius. I only wonder that, having such an opportunity of illustrating the doctrine of visible judgments, he never remarks, when Cortes and his men tumble the idols down the temple steps and call upon the people to take notice that their gods are powerless to help themselves, that possibly if some intelli-

gent native had tumbled down the image of the Virgin or patron saint after them nothing very remarkable might have ensued in consequence.

Of course you like Macready. Your name's Felton. I wish you could see him play Lear. It is stupendously terrible. But I suppose he would be slow to act it with the Boston company.

Hearty remembrances to Sumner, Longfellow, Prescott, and all whom you know I love to remember. Countless happy years to you and yours, my dear Felton, and some instalment of them, however slight, in England, in the loving company of

THE PROSCRIBED ONE.
O, breathe not his name.

Here is a portfolio of Dickens's letters, written to me from time to time during the past ten years. As long ago as the spring of 1858 I began to press him very hard to come to America and give us a course of readings from his works. At that time I had never heard him read in public, but the fame of his wonderful performances rendered me eager to have my own country share in the enjoyment of them. Being in London in the summer of 1859, and dining with him one day in his town residence, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, we had much talk in a corner of his library about coming to America. I thought him over-sensitive with regard to his reception here, and I tried to remove any obstructions that might exist in his mind at that time against a second visit across the Atlantic.

I followed up our conversation with a note setting forth the certainty of his success among his Transatlantic friends, and urging him to decide on a visit during the year. He replied to me, dating from "Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent."

"I write to you from my little Kentish country house, on the very spot where Falstaff ran away.

"I cannot tell you how very much obliged to you I feel for your kind suggestion, and for the perfectly frank and unaffected manner in which it is conveyed to me.

"It touches, I will admit to you frankly, a chord that has several times sounded in my breast, since I began my readings. I should very much like to read in America. But the idea is a mere dream as yet. Several strong reasons would make the journey difficult to me, and — even were they overcome — I would never make it, unless I had great general reason to believe that the American people really wanted to hear me.

"Through the whole of this autumn I shall be reading in various parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland. I mention this, in reference to the closing paragraph of your esteemed favor.

"Allow me once again to thank you most heartily, and to remain,

"Gratefully and faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Early in the month of July, 1859, I spent a day with him in his beautiful country retreat in Kent. He drove me about the leafy lanes in his basket wagon, pointing out the lovely spots belonging to his friends, and ending with a visit to the ruins of

Rochester Castle. We climbed up the time-worn walls and leaned out of the ivied windows, looking into the various apartments below. I remember how vividly he reproduced a probable scene in the great old banqueting-room, and how graphically he imagined the life of *ennui* and every-day tediousness that went on in those lazy old times. I recall his fancy picture of the dogs stretched out before the fire, sleeping and snoring with their masters. That day he seemed to revel in the past, and I stood by, listening almost with awe to his impressive voice, as he spoke out whole chapters of a romance destined never to be written. On our way back to Gad's Hill Place, he stopped in the road, I remember, to have a crack with a gentleman who he told me was a son of Sydney Smith. The only other guest at his table that day was Wilkie Collins; and after dinner we three went out and lay down on the grass, while Dickens showed off a raven that was hopping about, and told anecdotes of the bird and of his many predecessors. We also talked about his visiting America, I putting as many spokes as possible into that favorite wheel of mine. A day or two after I returned to London I received this note from him: —

". . . . Only to say that I heartily enjoyed our day, and shall long remember it. Also, that I have been perpetually repeating the —— experience (of a more tremendous sort in the way of ghastly comicality, experience there is none) on the grass, on my back. Also, that I have not forgotten

Cobbett. Also, that I shall trouble you at greater length when the mysterious oracle, of New York, pronounces.

"Wilkie Collins begs me to report that he declines pale horse, and all other horse exercise — and all exercise, except eating, drinking, smoking, and sleeping — in the dog days.

"With united kind regards, believe me always cordially yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

An agent had come out from New York with offers to induce him to arrange for a speedy visit to America, and Dickens was then waiting to see the man who had been announced as on his way to him. He was evidently giving the subject serious consideration, for on the 20th of July he sends me this note: —

"As I have not yet heard from Mr. —— of New York, I begin to think it likely (or, rather, I begin to think it more likely than I thought it before) that he has not backers good and sufficient, and that his 'mission' will go off. It is possible that I may hear from him before the month is out, and I shall not make any reading arrangements until it has come to a close; but I do not regard it as being very probable that the said —— will appear satisfactorily, either in the flesh or the spirit.

"Now, considering that it would be August before I could move in the matter, that it would be indispensably necessary to choose some business connection and have some business arrangements made in America, and that I am inclined to think it would not be easy to originate and complete all the necessary preparations for beginning in October, I want your kind advice on the following points: —

"1. Suppose I postponed the idea for a year.

"2. Suppose I postponed it until after Christmas.

"3. Suppose I sent some trusty person out to America *now*, to negotiate with some sound, responsible, trustworthy man of business in New York, accustomed to public undertakings of such a nature; my negotiator being fully empowered to conclude any arrangements with him that might appear, on consultation, best.

"Have you any idea of any such person to whom you could recommend me? Or of any such agent here? I only want to see my way distinctly, and to have it prepared before me, out in the States. Now, I will make no apology for troubling you, because I thoroughly rely on your interest and kindness.

"I am at Gad's Hill, except on Tuesdays and the greater part of Wednesdays.

"With kind regards, very faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Various notes passed between us after this, during my stay in London in 1859. On the 6th of August he writes: —

"I have considered the subject in every way, and have consulted with the few friends to whom I ever refer my doubts, and whose judgment is in the main excellent. I have (this is between ourselves) come to the conclusion *that I will not go now.*

"A year hence I may revive the matter, and your presence in America will then be a great encouragement and assistance to me. I shall see you (at least I count upon doing so) at my house in town before you turn your face towards the lock-up house; and we will then, reversing Macbeth, 'proceed further in this business.' . . . .

"Believe me always (and here I forever renounce 'Mr.,' as having anything whatever to do with our communication, and as being a mere preposterous interloper),

"Faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

When I arrived in Rome, early in 1860, one of the first letters I received from London was from him. The project of coming to America was constantly before him, and he wrote to me that he should have a great deal to say when I came back to England in the spring; but the plan fell through, and he gave up all hope of crossing the water again. However, I did not let the matter rest; and when I returned home I did not cease, year after year, to keep the subject open in my communications with him. He kept a watchful eye on what was going forward in America, both in literature and politics. During the war, of course, both of us gave up our correspondence about the readings. He was actively engaged all over Great Britain in giving his marvellous entertainments, and there certainly was no occasion for his travelling elsewhere. In October, 1862, I sent him the proof-sheets of an article, that was soon to appear in the Atlantic Monthly, on "Blind Tom," and on receipt of it he sent me a letter, from which this is an extract: —

"I have read that affecting paper you have had the kindness to send me, with strong interest and emotion. You may readily suppose that I have been most glad and ready to avail myself of your permission to print it. I have placed it in our Number made up to-day, which will be published on the 18th of this month, — well before you, — as you desire.

"Think of reading in America? Lord bless you, I think

of reading in the deepest depth of the lowest crater in the Moon, on my way there!

"There is no sun-picture of my Falstaff House as yet; but it shall be done, and you shall have it. It has been much improved internally since you saw it. . . . .

"I expect Macready at Gad's Hill on Saturday. You know that his second wife (an excellent one) presented him lately with a little boy? I was staying with him for a day or two last winter, and, seizing an umbrella when he had the audacity to tell me he was growing old, made at him with Macduff's defiance. Upon which he fell into the old fierce guard, with the desperation of thirty years ago.

"Kind remembrances to all friends who kindly remember me.

"Ever heartily yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Every time I had occasion to write to him after the war, I stirred up the subject of the readings. On the 2d of May, 1866, he says: —

"Your letter is an excessively difficult one to answer, because I really do not know that any sum of money that could be laid down would induce me to cross the Atlantic to read. Nor do I think it likely that any one on your side of the great water can be prepared to understand the state of the case. For example, I am now just finishing a series of thirty readings. The crowds attending them have been so astounding, and the relish for them has so far outgone an previous experience, that if I were to set myself the task, 'I will make such or such a sum of money by devoting myself to readings for a certain time,' I should have to go no further than Bond Street or Regent Street, to have it secured to me in a day. Therefore, if a specific offer, and a very large one indeed, were made to me from America, I should naturally ask myself, 'Why go through this wear and tear, merely to pluck fruit that grows on every bough

at home?' It is a delightful sensation to move a new people; but I have but to go to Paris, and I find the brightest people in the world quite ready for me. I say thus much in a sort of desperate endeavor to explain myself to you. I can put no price upon fifty readings in America, because I do not know that any possible price could pay me for them. And I really cannot say to any one disposed towards the enterprise, 'Tempt me,' because I have too strong a misgiving that he cannot in the nature of things do it.

"This is the plain truth. If any distinct proposal be submitted to me, I will give it a distinct answer. But the chances are a round thousand to one that the answer will be no, and therefore I feel bound to make the declaration beforehand.

" . . . . This place has been greatly improved since you were here, and we should be heartily glad if you and she could see it.

"Faithfully yours ever,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

On the 16th of October he writes: —

"Although I perpetually see in the papers that I am coming out with a new serial, I assure you I know no more of it at present. I am *not* writing (except for Christmas number of 'All the Year Round'), and am going to begin, in the middle of January, a series of forty-two readings. Those will probably occupy me until Easter. Early in the summer I hope to get to work upon a story that I have in my mind. But in what form it will appear I do not yet know, because when the time comes I shall have to take many circumstances into consideration. . . . .

"A faint outline of a castle in the air always dimly hovers between me and Rochester, in the great hall of which I see myself reading to American audiences. But my domestic surroundings must change before the castle takes tangible

form. And perhaps *I* may change first, and establish a castle in the other world. So no more at present.

"Believe me ever faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

In June, 1867, things begin to look more promising, and I find in one of his letters, dated the 3d of that month, some good news, as follows: —

"I cannot receive your pleasantest of notes, without assuring you of the interest and gratification that *I* feel on *my* side in our alliance. And now I am going to add a piece of intelligence that I hope may not be disagreeable.

"I am trying hard so to free myself, as to be able to come over to read this next winter! Whether I may succeed in this endeavor or no I cannot yet say, but I am trying HARD. So in the mean time don't contradict the rumor. In the course of a few mails I hope to be able to give you positive and definite information on the subject.

"My daughter (whom I shall not bring if I come) will answer for herself by and by. Understand that I am really endeavoring tooth and nail to make my way personally to the American public, and that no light obstacles will turn me aside, now that my hand is in.

"My dear Fields, faithfully yours always,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

This was followed up by another letter, dated the 13th, in which he says: —

"I have this morning resolved to send out to Boston, in the first week in August, Mr. Dolby, the secretary and manager of my readings. He is profoundly versed in the business of those delightful intellectual feasts (!), and will come straight to Ticknor and Fields, and will hold solemn

council with them, and will then go to New York, Philadelphia, Hartford, Washington, etc., etc., and see the rooms for himself, and make his estimates. He will then telegraph to me: 'I see my way to such and such results. Shall I go on?' If I reply, 'Yes,' I shall stand committed to begin reading in America with the month of December. If I reply, 'No,' it will be because I do not clearly see the game to be worth so large a candle. In either case he will come back to me.

"He is the brother of Madame Sainton Dolby, the celebrated singer. I have absolute trust in him and a great regard for him. He goes with me everywhere when I read, and manages for me to perfection.

"We mean to keep all this STRICTLY SECRET, as I beg of you to do, until I finally decide for or against. I am beleaguered by every kind of speculator in such things on your side of the water; and it is very likely that they would take the rooms over our heads, — to charge me heavily for them, — or would set on foot unheard-of devices for buying up the tickets, etc., etc., if the probabilities oozed out. This is exactly how the case stands now, and I confide it to you within a couple of hours after having so far resolved. Dolby quite understands that *he* is to confide in you, similarly, without a particle of reserve.

"Ever faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

On the 12th of July he says: —

"Our letters will be crossing one another rarely! I have received your cordial answer to my first notion of coming out; but there has not yet been time for me to hear again. . . . .

"With kindest regard to 'both your houses,' public and private,

"Ever faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

He had engaged to write for "Our Young Folks" "A Holiday Romance," and the following note, dated the 25th of July, refers to the story: —

"Your note of the 12th is like a cordial of the best sort. I have taken it accordingly.

"Dolby sails in the Java on Saturday, the 3d of next month, and will come direct to you. You will find him a frank and capital fellow. He is perfectly acquainted with his business and with his chief, and may be trusted without a grain of reserve.

"I hope the Americans will see the joke of 'Holiday Romance.' The writing seems to me so like children's, that dull folks (on *any* side of *any* water) might perhaps rate it accordingly! I should like to be beside you when you read it, and particularly when you read the Pirate's story. It made me laugh to that extent that my people here thought I was out of my wits, until I gave it to them to read, when they did likewise.

"Ever cordially yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

On the 3d of September he breaks out in this wise, Dolby having arrived out and made all arrangements for the readings: —

"Your cheering letter of the 21st of August arrived here this morning. A thousand thanks for it. I begin to think (nautically) that I 'head west'ard.' You shall hear from me fully and finally as soon as Dolby shall have reported personally.

"The other day I received a letter from Mr. —— of New York (who came over in the winning yacht, and described the voyage in the Times), saying he would much like to see me. I made an appointment in London, and observed that when he *did* see me he was obviously astonished. While I

was sensible that the magnificence of my appearance would fully account for his being overcome, I nevertheless angled for the cause of his surprise. He then told me that there was a paragraph going round the papers, to the effect that I was 'in a critical state of health.' I asked him if he was sure it was n't 'cricketing' state of health. To which he replied, Quite. I then asked him down here to dinner, and he was again staggered by finding me in sporting training; also much amused.

"Yesterday's and to-day's post bring me this unaccountable paragraph from hosts of uneasy friends, with the enormous and wonderful addition that 'eminent surgeons' are sending me to America for 'cessation from literary labor'!!! So I have written a quiet line to the Times, certifying to my own state of health, and have also begged Dixon to do the like in the Athenæum. I mention the matter to you, in order that you may contradict, from me, if the nonsense should reach America unaccompanied by the truth. But I suppose that the New York Herald will probably have got the latter from Mr. —— aforesaid. . . . .

"Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins are here; and the joke of the time is to feel my pulse when I appear at table, and also to inveigle innocent messengers to come over to the summer-house, where I write (the place is quite changed since you were here, and a tunnel under the high-road connects this shrubbery with the front garden), to ask, with their compliments, how I find myself *now*.

"If I come to America this next November, even you can hardly imagine with what interest I shall try Copperfield on an American audience, or, if they give me their heart, how freely and fully I shall give them mine. We will ask Dolby then whether he ever heard it before.

"I cannot thank you enough for your invaluable help to Dolby. He writes that at every turn and moment the sense nd knowledge and tact of Mr. Osgood are inestimable to him.

"Ever, my dear Fields, faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Here is a little note dated the 3d of October: –

"I cannot tell you how much I thank you for your kind little letter, which is like a pleasant voice coming across the Atlantic, with that domestic welcome in it which has no substitute on earth. If you knew how strongly I am inclined to allow myself the pleasure of staying at your house, you would look upon me as a kind of ancient Roman (which, I trust in Heaven, I am not) for having the courage to say no. But if I gave myself that gratification in the beginning, I could scarcely hope to get on in the hard 'reading' life, without offending some kindly disposed and hospitable American friend afterwards; whereas if I observe my English principle on such occasions, of having no abiding-place but an hotel, and stick to it from the first, I may perhaps count on being consistently uncomfortable.

"The nightly exertion necessitates meals at odd hours, silence and rest at impossible times of the day, a general Spartan behavior so utterly inconsistent with my nature, that if you were to give me a happy inch, I should take an ell, and frightfully disappoint you in public. I don't want to do that, if I can help it, and so I will be good in spite of myself.

"Ever your affectionate friend,

"Charles Dickens."

A ridiculous paragraph in the papers following close on the public announcement that Dickens was coming to America in November, drew from him this letter to me, dated also early in October: —

"I hope the telegraph clerks did not mutilate out of recognition or reasonable guess the words I added to Dolby's last telegram to Boston. 'Tribune London correspondent totally false.' Not only is there not a word of truth in the pretended conversation, but it is so absurdly unlike me that I

cannot suppose it to be even invented by any one who ever heard me exchange a word with mortal creature. For twenty years I am perfectly certain that I have never made any other allusion to the republication of my books in America than the good-humored remark, 'that if there had been international copyright between England and the States, I should have been a man of very large fortune, instead of a man of moderate savings, always supporting a very expensive public position.' Nor have I ever been such a fool as to charge the absence of international copyright upon individuals. Nor have I ever been so ungenerous as to disguise or suppress the fact that I have received handsome sums for advance sheets. When I was in the States, I said what I had to say on the question, and there an end. I am absolutely certain that I have never since expressed myself, even with soreness, on the subject. Reverting to the preposterous fabrication of the London correspondent, the statement that I ever talked about 'these fellows' who republished my books, or pretended to know (what I don't know at this instant) who made how much out of them, or ever talked of their sending me 'conscience money,' is as grossly and completely false as the statement that I ever said anything to the effect that I could not be expected to have an interest in the American people. And nothing can by any possibility be falser than that. Again and again in these pages (All the Year Round) I have expressed my interest in them. You will see it in the 'Child's History of England.' You will see it in the last Preface to 'American Notes.' Every American who has ever spoken with me in London, Paris, or where not, knows whether I have frankly said, 'You could have no better introduction to me than your country.' And for years and years when I have been asked about reading in America, my invariable reply has been, 'I have so many friends there, and constantly receive so many earnest letters from personally unknown readers there, that, but for domestic reasons, I would go to-morrow.' I think I must, in the confidential intercourse

between you and me, have written you to this effect more than once.

"The statement of the London correspondent from beginning to end is false. It is false in the letter and false in the spirit. He may have been misinformed, and the statement may not have originated with him. With whomsoever it originated, it never originated with me, and consequently is false. More than enough about it.

"As I hope to see you so soon, my dear Fields, and as I am busily at work on the Christmas number, I will not make this a longer letter than I can help. I thank you most heartily for your proffered hospitality, and need not tell you that if I went to any friend's house in America, I would go to yours. But the readings are very hard work, and I think I cannot do better than observe the rule on that side of the Atlantic which I observe on this, — of never, under such circumstances, going to a friend's house, but always staying at a hotel. I am able to observe it here, by being consistent and never breaking it. If I am equally consistent there, I can (I hope) offend no one.

"Dolby sends his love to you and all his friends (as I do), and is girding up his loins vigorously.

"Ever, my dear Fields, heartily and affectionately yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Before sailing in November he sent off this note to me from the office of All the Year Round: —

"I received your more than acceptable letter yesterday morning, and consequently am able to send you this line of acknowledgment by the next mail. Please God we will have that walk among the autumn leaves, before the readings set in.

"You may have heard from Dolby that a gorgeous repast is to be given to me to-morrow, and that it is expected to be a notable demonstration. I shall try, in what I say, to state my American case exactly. I have a strong hope and

belief that within the compass of a couple of minutes or so I can put it, with perfect truthfulness, in the light that my American friends would be best pleased to see me place it in. Either so, or my instinct is at fault.

"My daughters and their aunt unite with me in kindest loves. As I write, a shrill prolongation of the message comes in from the next room, 'Tell them to take care of you-u-u!'

"Tell Longfellow, with my love, that I am charged by Forster (who has been very ill of diffused gout and bronchitis) with a copy of his Sir John Eliot.

"I will bring you out the early proof of the Christmas number. We publish it here on the 12th of December. I am planning it (No Thoroughfare) out into a play for Wilkie Collins to manipulate after I sail, and have arranged for Fechter to go to the Adelphi Theatre and play a Swiss in it. It will be brought out the day after Christmas day.

"Here, at Boston Wharf, and everywhere else,

"Yours heartily and affectionately,

"C. D."

On a blustering evening in November, 1867, Dickens arrived in Boston Harbor, on his second visit to America. A few of his friends, under the guidance of the Collector of the port, steamed down in the custom-house boat to welcome him. It was pitch dark before we sighted the Cuba and ran alongside. The great steamer stopped for a few minutes to take us on board, and Dickens's cheery voice greeted me before I had time to distinguish him on the deck of the vessel. The news of the excitement the sale of the tickets to his readings had occasioned had been carried to him by the pilot, twenty miles out. He was in capital

spirits over the cheerful account that all was going on so well, and I thought he never looked in better health. The voyage had been a good one, and the ten days' rest on shipboard had strengthened him amazingly he said. As we were told that a crowd had assembled in East Boston, we took him in our little tug and landed him safely at Long Wharf in Boston, where carriages were in waiting. Rooms had been taken for him at the Parker House, and in half an hour after he had reached the hotel he was sitting down to dinner with half a dozen friends, quite prepared, he said, to give the first reading in America that very night, if desirable. Assurances that the kindest feelings towards him existed everywhere put him in great spirits, and he seemed happy to be among us. On Sunday he visited the School Ship and said a few words of encouragement and counsel to the boys. He began his long walks at once, and girded himself up for the hard winter's work before him. Steadily refusing all invitations to go out during the weeks he was reading, he only went into one other house besides the Parker, habitually, during his stay in Boston. Every one who was present remembers the delighted crowds that assembled nightly in the Tremont Temple, and no one who heard Dickens, during that eventful month of December, will forget the sensation produced by the great author, actor, and reader. Hazlitt says of Kean's Othello, "The tone of voice in which he

delivered the beautiful apostrophe 'Then, O, farewell,' struck on the heart like the swelling notes of some divine music, like the sound of years of departed happiness." There were thrills of pathos in Dickens's readings (of David Copperfield, for instance) which Kean himself never surpassed in dramatic effect.

He went from Boston to New York, carrying with him a severe catarrh contracted in our climate. In reality, much of the time during his reading in Boston he was quite ill from the effects of the disease, but he fought courageously against its effects, and always came up, on the night of the reading, all right. Several times I feared he would be obliged to postpone the readings, and I am sure almost any one else would have felt compelled to do so; but he declared no man had a right to break an engagement with the public, if he were able to be out of bed. His spirit was wonderful, and, although he lost all appetite and could partake of very little food, he was always cheerful and ready for his work when the evening came round. Every morning his table was covered with invitations to dinners and all sorts of entertainments, but he said, "I came for hard work, and I must try to fulfil the expectations of the American public." He did accept a dinner which was tendered to him by some of his literary friends in Boston; but the day before it was to come off he was so ill he felt

obliged to ask that the banquet might be given up. The strain upon his strength and nerves was very great during all the months he remained in the country, and only a man of iron will could have accomplished all he did. And here let me say, that although he was accustomed to talk and write a great deal about eating and drinking, I have rarely seen a man eat and drink less. He liked to dilate in imagination over the brewing of a bowl of punch, but I always noticed that when the punch was ready, he drank less of it than any one who might be present. It was the sentiment of the thing and not the thing itself that engaged his attention. He liked to have a little supper every night after a reading, and have three or four friends round the table with him, but he only pecked at the viands as a bird might do, and I scarcely saw him eat a hearty meal during his whole stay in the country. Both at Parker's Hotel in Boston, and at the Westminster in New York, everything was arranged by the proprietors for his comfort and happiness, and tempting dishes to pique his invalid appetite were sent up at different hours of the day, with the hope that he might be induced to try unwonted things and get up again the habit of eating more; but the influenza, that seized him with such masterful power, held the strong man down till he left the country.

One of the first letters I had from him, after he

had begun his reading tour, was dated from the Westminster Hotel in New York, on the 15th of January, 1868.

My dear Fields: On coming back from Philadelphia just now (three o'clock) I was welcomed by your cordial letter. It was a delightful welcome and did me a world of good.

The cold remains just as it was (beastly), and where it was (in my head). We have left off referring to the hateful subject, except in emphatic sniffs on my part, convulsive wheezes, and resounding sneezes.

The Philadelphia audience ready and bright. I think they understood the Carol better than Copperfield, but they were bright and responsive as to both. They also highly appreciated your friend Mr. Jack Hopkins. A most excellent hotel there, and everything satisfactory. While on the subject of satisfaction, I know you will be pleased to hear that a long run is confidently expected for the No Thoroughfare drama. Although the piece is well cast and well played, my letters tell me that Fechter is so remarkably fine as to play down the whole company. The Times, in its account of it, said that "Mr. Fechter" (in the Swiss mountain scene, and in the Swiss Hotel) "was practically alone upon the stage." It is splendidly got up, and the Mountain Pass (I planned it with the scene-painter) was loudly cheered by the whole house. Of course I knew that Fechter would tear himself to pieces rather than fall short, but I was not prepared for his contriving to get the pity and sympathy of the audience out of his passionate love for Marguerite.

My dear fellow, you cannot miss me more than I miss you and yours. And Heaven knows how gladly I would substitute Boston for Chicago, Detroit, and Co.! But the tour is fast shaping itself out into its last details, and we must remember that there is a clear fortnight in Boston, not counting the four Farewells. I look forward to that fortnight as a radiant landing-place in the series. . . . .

Rash youth! No presumptuous hand should try to make the punch, except in the presence of the hoary sage who pens these lines. With *him* on the spot to perceive and avert impending failure, with timely words of wisdom to arrest the erring hand and curb the straying judgment, and, with such gentle expressions of encouragement as his stern experience may justify, to cheer the aspirant with faint hopes of future excellence, — with these conditions observed, the daring mind may scale the heights of sugar and contemplate the depths of lemon. Otherwise not.

Dolby is at Washington, and will return in the night. —— is on guard. He made a most brilliant appearance before the Philadelphia public, and looked hard at them. The mastery of his eye diverted their attention from his boots: charming in themselves, but (unfortunately) two left ones.

I send my hearty and enduring love. Your kindness to the British Wanderer is deeply inscribed in his heart.

When I think of L——'s story about Dr. Webster, I feel like the lady in Nickleby who "has had a sensation of alternate cold and biling water running down her back ever since."

Ever, my dear Fields, your affectionate friend,

C. D.

His birthday, 7th of February, was spent in Washington, and on the 9th of the month he sent this little note from Baltimore: —

BALTIMORE, Sunday, February 9th, 1868.

MY DEAR FIELDS: I thank you heartily for your pleasant note (I can scarcely tell you *how* pleasant it was to receive the same) and for the beautiful flowers that you sent me on my birthday. For which — and much more — my loving thanks to both.

In consequence of the Washington papers having referred to the august 7th of this month, my room was on that day

a blooming garden. Nor were flowers alone represented there. The silversmith, the goldsmith, the landscape-painter, all sent in their contributions. After the reading was done at night, the whole audience rose; and it was spontaneous, hearty, and affecting.

I was very much surprised by the President's face and manner. It is, in its way, one of the most remarkable faces I have ever seen. Not imaginative, but very powerful in its firmness (or perhaps obstinacy), strength of will, and steadiness of purpose. There is a reticence in it too, curiously at variance with that first unfortunate speech of his. A man not to be turned or trifled with. A man (I should say) who must be killed to be got out of the way. His manners, perfectly composed. We looked at one another pretty hard. There was an air of chronic anxiety upon him. But not a crease or a ruffle in his dress, and his papers were as composed as himself. (Mr. Thornton was going in to deliver his credentials, immediately afterwards.)

This day fortnight will find me, please God, in my "native Boston." I wish I were there to-day.

Ever, my dear Fields, your affectionate friend,

CHARLES DICKENS,
Chairman Missionary Society.

When he returned to Boston in the latter part of the month, after his fatiguing campaign in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, he seemed far from well, and one afternoon sent round from the Parker House to me this little note, explaining why he could not go out on our accustomed walk; —

"I have been terrifying Dolby out of his wits, by setting in for a paroxysm of sneezing, and it would be madness in me, with such a cold, and on such a night, and with to-morrow's reading before me, to go out. I need not add that

I shall be heartily glad to see you if you have time. Many thanks for the Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight. I shall 'save up' that book, to read on the passage home. After turning over the leaves, I have shut it up and put it away; for I am a great reader at sea, and wish to reserve the interest that I find awaiting me in the personal following of the sad war. Good God, when one stands among the hearths that war has broken, what an awful consideration it is that such a tremendous evil *must* be sometimes!

"Ever affectionately yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

I will dispose here of the question often asked me by correspondents, and lately renewed in many epistles, "*Was Charles Dickens a believer in our Saviour's life and teachings?*" Persons addressing to me such inquiries must be profoundly ignorant of the works of the great author, whom they endeavor by implication to place among the "Unbelievers." If anywhere, out of the Bible, God's goodness and mercy are solemnly commended to the world's attention, it is in the pages of Dickens. I had supposed that these written words of his, which have been so extensively copied both in Europe and America, from his last will and testament, dated the 12th of May, 1869, would forever remain an emphatic testimony to his Christian faith: —

"I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear chil-

dren humbly to try to guide themselves by the teachings of the New Testament."

I wish it were in my power to bring to the knowledge of all who doubt the Christian character of Charles Dickens certain other memorable words of his, written years ago, with reference to Christmas. They are not as familiar as many beautiful things from the same pen on the same subject, for the paper which enshrines them has not as yet been collected among his authorized works. Listen to these loving words in which the Christian writer has embodied the life of his Saviour: —

"Hark! the Waits are playing, and they break my childish sleep! What images do I associate with the Christmas music as I see them set forth on the Christmas tree? Known before all others, keeping far apart from all the others, they gather round my little bed. An angel, speaking to a group of shepherds in a field; some travellers, with eyes uplifted, following a star; a baby in a manger; a child in a spacious temple, talking with grave men; a solemn figure with a mild and beautiful face, raising a dead girl by the hand; again, near a city gate, calling back the son of a widow, on his bier, to life; a crowd of people looking through the opened roof of a chamber where he sits, and letting down a sick person on a bed, with ropes; the same in a tempest, walking on the water to a ship; again, on a sea-shore, teaching a great multitude; again, with a child upon his knee, and other children round; again, restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, strength to the lame, knowledge to the ignorant; again, dying upon a cross, watched by armed soldiers, a thick darkness coming on, the earth beginning to shake, and only one voice heard, — 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do!'"

The writer of these pages begs to say here, most respectfully and emphatically, that he will not feel himself bound, in future, to reply to any inquiries, from however well-meaning correspondents, as to whether Charles Dickens was an "Unbeliever," or a "Unitarian," or an "Episcopalian," or whether "he ever went to church in his life," or "used improper language," or "drank enough to hurt him." He was human, very human, but he was no scoffer or doubter. His religion was of the heart, and his faith beyond questioning. He taught the world, said Dean Stanley over his new-made grave in Westminster Abbey, great lessons of "the eternal value of generosity, of purity, of kindness, and of unselfishness," and by his fruits he shall be known of all men.

Let me commend to the attention of my numerous nameless correspondents, who have attempted to soil the moral character of Dickens, the following little incident, related to me by himself, during a summer-evening walk among the Kentish meadows, a few months before he died. I will try to tell the story, if possible, as simply and naturally as he told it to me.

"I chanced to be travelling some years ago," he said, "in a railroad carriage between Liverpool and London. Beside myself there were two ladies and a gentleman occupying the carriage. We happened to be all strangers to each other, but I noticed at

once that a clergyman was of the party. I was occupied with a ponderous article in the 'Times,' when the sound of my own name drew my attention to the fact that a conversation was going forward among the three other persons in the carriage with reference to myself and my books. One of the ladies was perusing 'Bleak House,' then lately published, and the clergyman had commenced a conversation with the ladies by asking what book they were reading. On being told the author's name and the title of the book, he expressed himself greatly grieved that any lady in England should be willing to take up the writings of so vile a character as Charles Dickens. Both the ladies showed great surprise at the low estimate the clergyman put upon an author whom they had been accustomed to read, to say the least, with a certain degree of pleasure. They were evidently much shocked at what the man said of the immoral tendency of these books, which they seemed never before to have suspected; but when he attacked the author's private character, and told monstrous stories of his immoralities in every direction, the volume was shut up and consigned to the dark pockets of a travelling-bag. I listened in wonder and astonishment, behind my newspaper, to stories of myself, which if they had been true would have consigned any man to a prison for life. After my fictitious biographer had occupied himself for nearly an hour with the elo-

quent recital of my delinquencies and crimes, I very quietly joined in the conversation. Of course I began by modestly doubting some statements which I had just heard, touching the author of 'Bleak House,' and other unimportant works of a similar character. The man stared at me, and evidently considered my appearance on the conversational stage an intrusion and an impertinence. 'You seem to speak,' I said, 'from personal knowledge of Mr. Dickens. Are you acquainted with him?' He rather evaded the question, but, following him up closely, I compelled him to say that he had been talking, not from his own knowledge of the author in question; but he said he knew for a certainty that every statement he had made was a true one. I then became more earnest in my inquiries for proofs, which he arrogantly declined giving. The ladies sat by in silence, listening intently to what was going forward. An author they had been accustomed to read for amusement had been traduced for the first time in their hearing, and they were waiting to learn what I had to say in refutation of the clergyman's charges. I was taking up his vile stories, one by one, and stamping them as false in every particular, when the man grew furious, and asked me if I knew Dickens personally. I replied, 'Perfectly well; no man knows him better than I do; and all your stories about him from beginning to end, to these ladies, are unmitigated lies.' The

man became livid with rage, and asked for my card. 'You shall have it,' I said, and, coolly taking out one, I presented it to him without bowing. We were just then nearing the station in London, so that I was spared a longer interview with my *truthful* companion; but, if I were to live a hundred years, I should not forget the abject condition into which the narrator of my crimes was instantly plunged. His face turned white as his cravat, and his lips refused to utter words. He seemed like a wilted vegetable, and as if his legs belonged to somebody else. The ladies became aware of the situation at once, and, bidding them 'good day,' I stepped smilingly out of the carriage. Before I could get away from the station the man had mustered up strength sufficient to follow me, and his apologies were so nauseous and craven, that I pitied him from my soul. I left him with this caution, 'Before you make charges against the character of any man again, about whom you know nothing, and of whose works you are utterly ignorant, study to be a seeker after Truth, and avoid Lying as you would eternal perdition.'."

I never ceased to wonder at Dickens's indomitable cheerfulness, even when he was suffering from ill health, and could not sleep more than two or three hours out of the twenty-four. He made it a point never to inflict on another what he might be painfully enduring himself, and I have seen him,

with what must have been a great effort, arrange a merry meeting for some friends, when I knew that almost any one else under similar circumstances would have sought relief in bed.

One evening at a little dinner given by himself to half a dozen friends in Boston, he came out very strong. His influenza lifted a little, as he said afterwards, and he took advantage of the lull. Only his own pen could possibly give an idea of that hilarious night, and I will merely attempt a brief reference to it. As soon as we were seated at the table, I read in his lustrous eye, and heard in his jovial voice, that all solemn forms were to be dispensed with on that occasion, and that merriment might be confidently expected. To the end of the feast there was no let up to his magnificent cheerfulness and humor. J—— B——, ex-minister plenipotentiary as he was, went in for nonsense, and he, I am sure, will not soon forget how undignified we all were, and what screams of laughter went up from his own uncontrollable throat. Among other tomfooleries, we had an imitation of scenes at an English hustings, Dickens bringing on his candidate (his friend D ——), and I opposing him with mine (the ex-minister). Of course there was nothing spoken in the speeches worth remembering, but it was Dickens's *manner* that carried off the whole thing. D—— necessarily now wears his hair so widely parted in the middle that only two little capil-

lary scraps are left, just over his ears, to show what kind of thatch once covered his jolly cranium. Dickens pretended that *his* candidate was superior to the other, *because* he had no hair; and that mine, being profusely supplied with that commodity was in consequence disqualified in a marked degree for an election. His speech, for volubility and nonsense, was nearly fatal to us all. We roared and writhed in agonies of laughter, and the candidates themselves were literally choking and crying with the humor of the thing. But the fun culminated when I tried to get a hearing in behalf of my man, and Dickens drowned all my attempts to be heard with imitative jeers of a boisterous election mob. He seemed to have as many voices that night as the human throat is capable of, and the repeated interrupting shouts, among others, of a pretended husky old man bawling out at intervals, "Three cheers for the bald 'un!" "Down vith the hairy aristocracy!" "Up vith the little shiny chap on top!" and other similar outbursts, I can never forget. At last, in sheer exhaustion, we all gave in, and agreed to break up and thus save our lives, if it were not already too late to make the attempt.

The extent and variety of Dickens's tones were wonderful. Once he described to me in an inimitable way a scene he witnessed many years ago at a London theatre, and I am certain no professional ventriloquist could have reproduced it better. I

could never persuade him to repeat the description in presence of others; but he did it for me several times during our walks into the country, where he was, of course, unobserved. His recital of the incident was irresistibly droll, and no words of mine can give the *situation* even, as he gave it. He said he was once sitting in the pit of a London theatre, when two men came in and took places directly in front of him. Both were evidently strangers from the country, and not very familiar with the stage. One of them was stone deaf, and relied entirely upon his friend to keep him informed of the dialogue and story of the play as it went on, by having bawled into his ear, word for word, as near as possible what the actors and actresses were saying. The man who could hear became intensely interested in the play, and kept close watch of the stage. The deaf man also shared in the progressive action of the drama, and rated his friend soundly, in a loud voice, if a stitch in the story of the play were inadvertently dropped. Dickens gave the two voices of these two spectators with his best comic and dramatic power. Notwithstanding the roars of the audience, for the scene in the pit grew immensely funny to them as it went on, the deaf man and his friend were too much interested in the main business of the evening to observe that they were noticed. One bawled louder, and the other, with his elevated ear-trumpet, listened more intently

than ever. At length the scene culminated in a most unexpected manner. "Now," screamed the hearing man to the deaf one, "they are going to elope!" "*Who* is going to elope?" asked the deaf man, in a loud, vehement tone. "Why, them two, the young man in the red coat and the girl in a white gown, that 's a talking together now, and just going off the stage!" "Well, then, you must have missed telling me something they 've said before," roared the other in an enraged and stentorian voice; "for there was nothing in their conduct all the evening, as you have been representing it to me, that would warrant them in such a proceeding!" At which the audience could not bear it any longer, and screamed their delight till the curtain fell.

Dickens was always planning something to interest and amuse his friends, and when in America he taught us several games arranged by himself, which we played again and again, he taking part as our instructor. While he was travelling from point to point, he was cogitating fresh charades to be acted when we should again meet. It was at Baltimore that he first conceived the idea of a walking-match, which should take place on his return to Boston, and he drew up a set of humorous "articles," which he sent to me with this injunction, "Keep them in a place of profound safety, for attested exe-

cution, until my arrival in Boston." He went into this matter of the walking-match with as much earnest directness as if he were planning a new novel. The articles, as prepared by himself, are thus drawn up:—

"Articles of agreement entered into at Baltimore, in the United States of America, this third day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight, between —— ——, British subject, *alias* the Man of Ross, and —— —— ——, American citizen, *alias* the Boston Bantam.

"Whereas, some Bounce having arisen between the above men in reference to feats of pedestrianism and agility, they have agreed to settle their differences and prove who is the better man, by means of a walking-match for two hats a side and the glory of their respective countries; and whereas they agree that the said match shall come off, whatsoever the weather, on the Mill Dam Road outside Boston, on Saturday, the 29th day of this present month; and whereas they agree that the personal attendants on themselves during the whole walk, and also the umpires and starters and declarers of victory in the match shall be —— —— of Boston, known in sporting circles as Massachusetts Jemmy, and Charles Dickens of Falstaff's Gad's Hill, whose surprising performances (without the least variation) on that truly national instrument, the American catarrh, have won for him the well-merited title of the Gad's Hill Gasper.

"1. The men are to be started, on the day appointed, by Massachusetts Jemmy and The Gasper.

"2. Jemmy and The Gasper are, on some previous day, to walk out at the rate of not less than four miles an hour by The Gasper's watch, for one hour and a half. At the expiration of that one hour and a half they are to carefully note the place at which they halt. On the match's coming off

they are to station themselves in the middle of the road, at that precise point, and the men (keeping clear of them and of each other) are to turn round them, right shoulder inward, and walk back to the starting-point. The man declared by them to pass the starting-point first is to be the victor and the winner of the match.

"3. No jostling or fouling allowed.

"4. All cautions or orders issued to the men by the umpires, starters, and declarers of victory to be considered final and admitting of no appeal.

"A sporting narrative of the match to be written by The Gasper within one week after its coming off, and the same to be duly printed (at the expense of the subscribers to these articles) on a broadside. The said broadside to be framed and glazed, and one copy of the same to be carefully preserved by each of the subscribers to these articles.

"6. The men to show on the evening of the day of walking at six o'clock precisely, at the Parker House, Boston, when and where a dinner will be given them by The Gasper. The Gasper to occupy the chair, faced by Massachusetts Jemmy. The latter promptly and formally to invite, as soon as may be after the date of these presents, the following guests to honor the said dinner with their presence; that is to say [here follow the names of a few of his friends, whom he wished to be invited].

"Now, lastly. In token of their accepting the trusts and offices by these articles conferred upon them, these articles are solemnly and formally signed by Massachusetts Jemmy and by the Gad's Hill Gasper, as well as by the men themselves.

"Signed by the Man of Ross, otherwise —— ——.

"Signed by the Boston Bantam, otherwise —— —— ——.

"Signed by Massachusetts Jemmy, otherwise —— —— ——.

"Signed by the Gad's Hill Gasper, otherwise Charles Dickens.

"Witness to the signatures, —— ——."

When he returned to Boston from Baltimore, he proposed that I should accompany him over the walking-ground "at the rate of not less than four miles an hour, for one hour and a half." I shall not soon forget the tremendous pace at which he travelled that day. I have seen a great many walkers, but never one with whom I found it such hard work to keep up. Of course his object was to stretch out the space as far as possible for our friends to travel on the appointed day. With watch in hand, Dickens strode on over the Mill Dam toward Newton Centre. When we reached the turning-point, and had established the extreme limit, we both felt that we had given the men who were to walk in the match excellent good measure. All along the road people had stared at us, wondering, I suppose, why two men on such a blustering day should be pegging away in the middle of the road as if life depended on the speed they were getting over the ground. We had walked together many a mile before this, but never at such a rate as on this day. I had never seen his full power tested before, and I could not but feel great admiration for his walking pluck. We were both greatly heated, and, seeing a little shop by the roadside, we went in for refreshments. A few sickly looking oranges were all we could obtain to quench our thirst, and we seized those and sat down on the shop door-steps, tired and panting. After a few minutes' rest we started

again and walked back to town. Thirteen miles' stretch on a brisk winter day did neither of us any harm, and Dickens was in great spirits over the match that was so soon to come off. We agreed to walk over the ground again on the appointed day, keeping company with our respective men. Here is the account that Dickens himself drew up, of that day's achievement, for the broadside.

"THE SPORTING NARRATIVE.

"The Men.

"The Boston Bantam (*alias* Bright Chanticleer) is a young bird, though too old to be caught with chaff. He comes of a thorough game breed, and has a clear though modest crow. He pulls down the scale at ten stone and a half and add a pound or two. His previous performances in the pedestrian line have not been numerous. He once achieved a neat little match against time in two left boots at Philadelphia; but this must be considered as a pedestrian eccentricity, and cannot be accepted by the rigid chronicler as high art. The old mower with the scythe and hour-glass has not yet laid his mauley heavily on the Bantam's frontispiece, but he has had a grip at the Bantam's top feathers, and in plucking out a handful was very near making him like the great Napoleon Bonaparte (with the exception of the victualling department), when the ancient one found himself too much occupied to carry out the idea, and gave it up. The Man of Ross (*alias* old Alick Pope, *alias* Allourpraiseswhyshouldlords, etc.) is a thought and a half too fleshy, and, if he accidentally sat down upon his baby, would do it to the tune of fourteen stone. This popular codger is of the rubicund and jovial sort, and has long been known as a piscatorial pedestrian on the banks of the Wye. But Izaak Walton had n't pace, — look at his book and you 'll find it

slow, — and when that article comes in question, the fishing-rod may prove to some of his disciples a rod in pickle. Howbeit, the Man of Ross is a lively ambler, and has a smart stride of his own.

"The Training.

"If vigorous attention to diet could have brought both men up to the post in tiptop feather, their condition would have left nothing to be desired. But both might have had more daily practice in the poetry of motion. Their breathings were confined to an occasional Baltimore burst under the guidance of The Gasper, and to an amicable toddle between themselves at Washington.

"The Course.

"Six miles and a half, good measure, from the first tree on the Mill Dam Road, lies the little village (with no refreshments in it but five oranges and a bottle of blacking) of Newton Centre. Here Massachusetts Jemmy and The Gasper had established the turning-point. The road comprehended every variety of inconvenience to test the mettle of the men, and nearly the whole of it was covered with snow.

"The Start

was effected beautifully. The men taking their stand in exact line at the starting-post, the first tree aforesaid, received from The Gasper the warning, "Are you ready?" and then the signal, "One, two, three. Go!" They got away exactly together, and at a spinning speed, waited on by Massachusetts Jemmy and The Gasper.

"The Race.

"In the teeth of an intensely cold and bitter wind, before which the snow flew fast and furious across the road from right to left, the Bantam slightly led. But the Man responded to the challenge, and soon breasted him. For the

first three miles each led by a yard or so alternately; but the walking was very even. On four miles being called by The Gasper the men were side by side; and then ensued one of the best periods of the race, the same splitting pace being held by both through a heavy snow-wreath and up a dragging hill. At this point it was anybody's game, a dollar on Rossius and two half-dollars on the member of the feathery tribe. When five miles were called, the men were still shoulder to shoulder. At about six miles The Gasper put on a tremendous spirt to leave the men behind and establish himself at the turning-point at the entrance of the village. He afterwards declared that he received a mental knock-downer on taking his station and facing about, to find Bright Chanticleer close in upon him, and Rossius steaming up like a locomotive. The Bantam rounded first; Rossius rounded wide; and from that moment the Bantam steadily shot ahead. Though both were breathed at the town, the Bantam quickly got his bellows into obedient condition, and blew away like an orderly blacksmith in full work. The forcing-pumps of Rossius likewise proved themselves tough and true, and warranted first-rate, but he fell off in pace; whereas the Bantam pegged away with his little drumsticks, as if he saw his wives and a peck of barley waiting for him at the family perch. Continually gaining upon him of Ross, Chanticleer gradually drew ahead within a very few yards of half a mile, finally doing the whole distance in two hours and forty-eight minutes. Ross had ceased to compete three miles short of the winning-post, but bravely walked it out and came in seven minutes later.

"REMARKS.

"The difficulties under which this plucky match was walked can only be appreciated by those who were on the ground. To the excessive rigor of the icy blast and the depth and state of the snow must be added the constant scattering of the latter into the air and into the eyes of the men, while heads of hair, beards, eyelashes, and eye-

brows were frozen into icicles. To breathe at all, in such a rarefied and disturbed atmosphere, was not easy; but to breathe up to the required mark was genuine, slogging, ding-dong, hard labor. That both competitors were game to the backbone, doing what they did under such conditions, was evident to all; but to his gameness the courageous Bantam added unexpected endurance and (like the sailor's watch that did three hours to the cathedral clock's one) unexpected powers of going when wound up. The knowing eye could not fail to detect considerable disparity between the lads; Chanticleer being, as Mrs. Cratchit said of Tiny Tim, "very light to carry," and Rossius promising fair to attain the rotundity of the Anonymous Cove in the Epigram: —

'And when he walks the streets the paviors cry,
"God bless you, sir!" — and lay their rammers by.'"

The dinner at the Parker House, after the fatigues of the day, was a brilliant success. The Great International Walking-Match was over; America had won, and England was nowhere. The victor and the vanquished were the heroes of the occasion, for both had shown great powers of endurance and done their work in capital time. We had no set speeches at the table, for we had voted eloquence a bore before we sat down. David Copperfield, Hyperion, Hosea Biglow, the Autocrat, and the Bad Boy were present, and there was no need of set speeches. The ladies present, being all daughters of America, smiled upon the champion, and we had a great, good time. The banquet provided by Dickens was profusely decorated with flowers, arranged by himself. The master of the

feast was in his best mood, albeit his country had lost; and we all declared, when we bade him good night, that none of us had ever enjoyed a festival more.

Soon after this Dickens started on his reading travels again, and I received from him frequent letters from various parts of the country. On the 8th of March, 1868, he writes from a Western city: —

Sunday, 8th March, 1868.

My dear Fields: We came here yesterday most comfortably in a "drawing-room car," of which (Rule Britannia!) we bought exclusive possession. —— is rather a depressing feather in the eagle's wing, when considered on a Sunday and in a thaw. Its hotel is likewise a dreary institution. But I have an impression that we must be in the wrong one, and buoy myself up with a devout belief in the other, over the way. The awakening to consciousness this morning on a lop-sided bedstead facing nowhere, in a room holding nothing but sour dust, was more terrible than the being afraid to go to bed last night. To keep ourselves up we played whist (double dummy) until neither of us could bear to speak to the other any more. We had previously supped on a tough old nightmare named buffalo.

What do you think of a "Fowl de poulet"? or a "Paettie de Shay"? or "Celary"? or "Murange with cream"? Because all these delicacies are in the printed bill of fare! If Mrs. Fields would like the recipe, how to make a "Paettie de Shay," telegraph instantly, and the recipe shall be purchased. We asked the Irish waiter what this dish was, and he said it was "the Frinch name the steward giv' to oyster pattie." It is usually washed down, I believe, with "Movseaux," or "Table Madeira," or "Abasinthe," or

"Curraco," all of which drinks are on the wine list. I mean to drink my love to —— after dinner in Movseaux. Your ruggeder nature shall be pledged in Absinthe.

Ever affectionately,

CHARLES DICKENS.

On the 19th of March he writes from Albany: —

ALBANY, 19th March, 1868.

MY DEAR ——: I should have answered your kind and welcome note before now, but that we have been in difficulties. After creeping through water for miles upon miles, our train gave it up as a bad job between Rochester and this place, and stranded us, early on Tuesday afternoon, at Utica. There we remained all night, and at six o'clock yesterday morning were ordered up to get ready for starting again. Then we were countermanded. Then we were once more told to get ready. Then we were told to stay where we were. At last we got off at eight o'clock, and after paddling through the flood until half past three, got landed here, — to the great relief of our minds as well as bodies, for the tickets were all sold out for last night. We had all sorts of adventures by the way, among which two of the most notable were: —

1. Picking up two trains out of the water, in which the passengers had been composedly sitting all night, until relief should arrive.

2. Unpacking and releasing into the open country a great train of cattle and sheep that had been in the water I don't know how long, and that had begun in their imprisonment to eat each other. I never could have realized the strong and dismal expressions of which the faces of sheep are capable, had I not seen the haggard countenances of this unfortunate flock as they were tumbled out of their dens and picked themselves up and made off, leaping wildly (many with broken legs) over a great mound of thawing snow, and over the worried body of a deceased companion.

Their misery was so very human that I was sorry to recognize several intimate acquaintances conducting themselves in this forlornly gymnastic manner.

As there is no question that our friendship began in some previous state of existence many years ago, I am now going to make bold to mention a discovery we have made concerning Springfield. We find that by remaining there next Saturday and Sunday, instead of coming on to Boston, we shall save several hours' travel, and much wear and tear of our baggage and camp-followers. Ticknor reports the Springfield hotel excellent. Now will you and Fields come and pass Sunday with us there? It will be delightful, if you can. If you cannot, will you defer our Boston dinner until the following Sunday? Send me a hopeful word to Springfield (Massasoit House) in reply, please.

Lowell's delightful note enclosed with thanks. *Do* make a trial for Springfield. We saw Professor White at Syracuse, and went out for a ride with him. Queer quarters at Utica, and nothing particular to eat; but the people so very anxious to please, that it was better than the best cuisine. I made a jug of punch (in the bedroom pitcher), and we drank our love to you and Fields. Dolby had more than his share, under pretence of devoted enthusiasm.

Ever affectionately yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

His readings everywhere were crowned with enthusiastic success, and if his strength had been equal to his will, he could have stayed in America another year, and occupied every night of it with his wonderful impersonations. I regretted extremely that he felt obliged to give up visiting the West. Invitations which greatly pleased him came day after day from the principal cities and towns, but his friends soon discovered that his health

would not allow him to extend his travels beyond Washington.

He sailed for home on the 19th of April, 1868, and we shook hands with him on the deck of the Russia as the good ship turned her prow toward England. He was in great spirits at the thought of so soon again seeing Gad's Hill, and the prospect of a rest after all his toilsome days and nights in America. While at sea he wrote the following letter to me: —

ABOARD THE RUSSIA, BOUND FOR LIVERPOOL,
Sunday, 26th April, 1868.

MY DEAR FIELDS: In order that you may have the earliest intelligence of me, I begin this note to-day in my small cabin, purposing (if it should prove practicable) to post it at Queenstown for the return steamer.

We are already past the Banks of Newfoundland, although our course was seventy miles to the south, with the view of avoiding ice seen by Judkins in the Scotia on his passage out to New York. The Russia is a magnificent ship, and has dashed along bravely. We had made more than thirteen hundred and odd miles at noon to-day. The wind, after being a little capricious, rather threatens at the present time to turn against us, but our run is already eighty miles ahead of the Russia's last run in this direction, — a very fast one. . . . . To all whom it may concern, report the Russia in the highest terms. She rolls more easily than the other Cunard Screws, is kept in perfect order, and is most carefully looked after in all departments. We have had nothing approaching to heavy weather; still, one can speak to the trim of the ship. Her captain, a gentleman; bright, polite, good-natured, and vigilant. . . . .

As to me, I am greatly better, I hope. I have got on my

right boot to-day for the first time; the "true American" seems to be turning faithless at last; and I made a Gad's Hill breakfast this morning, as a further advance on having otherwise eaten and drunk all day ever since Wednesday.

You will see Anthony Trollope, I dare say. What was my amazement to see him with these eyes come aboard in the mail tender just before we started! He had come out in the Scotia just in time to dash off again in said tender to shake hands with me, knowing me to be aboard here. It was most heartily done. He is on a special mission of convention with the United States post-office.

We have been picturing your movements, and have duly checked off your journey home, and have talked about you continually. But I have thought about you both, even much, much more. You will never know how I love you both; or what you have been to me in America, and will always be to me everywhere; or how fervently I thank you.

All the working of the ship seems to be done on my forehead. It is scrubbed and holystoned (my head — not the deck) at three every morning. It is scraped and swabbed all day. Eight pairs of heavy boots are now clattering on it, getting the ship under sail again. Legions of ropes'-ends are flopped upon it as I write, and I must leave off with Dolby's love.

Thursday, 30th.

Soon after I left off as above we had a gale of wind, which blew all night. For a few hours on the evening side of midnight there was no getting from this cabin of mine to the saloon, or *vice versa*, so heavily did the sea break over the decks. The ship, however, made nothing of it, and we were all right again by Monday afternoon. Except for a few hours yesterday (when we had a very light head wind), the weather has been constantly favorable, and we are now bowling away at a great rate, with a fresh breeze filling all our sails. We expect to be at Queenstown between midnight and three in the morning.

I hope, my dear Fields, you may find this legible, but I

rather doubt it; for there is motion enough on the ship to render writing to a landsman, however accustomed to pen and ink, rather a difficult achievement. Besides which, I slide away gracefully from the paper, whenever I want to be particularly expressive. . . . .

——, sitting opposite to me at breakfast, always has the following items: A large dish of porridge, into which he casts slices of butter and a quantity of sugar. Two cups of tea. A steak. Irish stew. Chutnee, and marmalade. Another deputation of two has solicited a reading to-night. Illustrious novelist has unconditionally and absolutely declined.

More love, and more to that, from your ever affectionate friend,

C. D.

His first letter from home gave us all great pleasure, for it announced his complete recovery from the severe influenza that had fastened itself upon him so many months before. Among his earliest notes I find these paragraphs: —

"I have found it so extremely difficult to write about America (though never so briefly) without appearing to blow trumpets on the one hand, or to be inconsistent with my avowed determination *not* to write about it on the other, that I have taken the simple course enclosed. The number will be published on the 6th of June. It appears to me to be the most modest and manly course, and to derive some graceful significance from its title. . . . .

"Thank my dear —— for me for her delightful letter received on the 16th. I will write to her very soon, and tell her about the dogs. I would write by this post, but that Wills's absence (in Sussex, and getting no better there as yet) so overwhelms me with business that I can scarcely get through it.

"Miss me? Ah, my dear fellow, but how do I miss *you!*

We talk about you both at Gad's Hill every day of our lives. And I never see the place looking very pretty indeed, or hear the birds sing all day long and the nightingales all night, without restlessly wishing that you were both there.

"With best love, and truest and most enduring regard, ever, my dear Fields,

"Your most affectionate,

"C. D."

". . . . I hope you will receive by Saturday's Cunard a case containing:

"1. A trifling supply of the pen-knibs that suited your hand.

"2. A do. of unfailing medicine for cockroaches.

"3. Mrs. Gamp, for ——.

"The case is addressed to you at Bleecker Street, New York. If it should be delayed for the knibs (or nibs) promised to-morrow, and should be too late for the Cunard packet, it will in that case come by the next following Inman steamer.

"Everything here looks lovely, and I find it (you will be surprised to hear) really a pretty place! I have seen No Thoroughfare twice. Excellent things in it; but it drags, to my thinking. It is, however, a great success in the country, and is now getting up with great force in Paris. Fechter is ill, and was ordered off to Brighton yesterday. Wills is ill too, and banished into Sussex for perfect rest. Otherwise, thank God, I find everything well and thriving. You and my dear Mrs. F—— are constantly in my mind. Procter greatly better. . . . ."

On the 25th of May he sent off the following from Gad's Hill: —

MY DEAR ——: As you ask me about the dogs, I begin with them. When I came down first, I came to Gravesend, five miles off. The two Newfoundland dogs coming to meet me, with the usual carriage and the usual driver, and beholding me coming in my usual dress out at the usual door,

it struck me that their recollection of my having been absent for any unusual time was at once cancelled. They behaved (they are both young dogs) exactly in their usual manner; coming behind the basket phaeton as we trotted along, and lifting their heads to have their ears pulled, — a special attention which they receive from no one else. But when I drove into the stable-yard, Linda (the St. Bernard) was greatly excited; weeping profusely, and throwing herself on her back that she might caress my foot with her great fore-paws. M——'s little dog too, Mrs. Bouncer, barked in the greatest agitation on being called down and asked my M——, "Who is this?" and tore round and round me, like the dog in the Faust outlines. You must know that all the farmers turned out on the road in their market-chaises to say, "Welcome home, sir!" that all the houses along the road were dressed with flags; and that our servants, to cut out the rest, had dressed this house so that every brick of it was hidden. They had asked M——'s permission to "ring the alarm-bell (!) when master drove up"; but M——, having some slight idea that that compliment might awaken master's sense of the ludicrous, had recommended bell abstinence. But on Sunday, the village choir (which includes the bell-ringers) made amends. After some unusually brief pious reflection in the crowns of their hats at the end of the sermon, the ringers bolted out and rang like mad until I got home. (There had been a conspiracy among the villagers to take the horse out, if I had come to our own station, and draw me here. M—— and G—— had got wind of it and warned me.)

Divers birds sing here all day, and the nightingales all night. The place is lovely, and in perfect order. I have put five mirrors in the Swiss châlet (where I write) and they reflect and refract in all kinds of ways the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees; and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in, at the open

windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious.

Dolby (who sends a world of messages) found his wife much better than he expected, and the children (wonderful to relate!) perfect. The little girl winds up her prayers every night with a special commendation to Heaven of me and the pony, — as if I must mount him to get there! I dine with Dolby (I was going to write "him," but found it would look as if I were going to dine with the pony) at Greenwich this very day, and if your ears do not burn from six to nine this evening, then the Atlantic is a non-conductor. We are already settling — think of this! — the details of my farewell course of readings. I am brown beyond relief, and cause the greatest disappointment in all quarters by looking so well. It is really wonderful what those fine days at sea did for me! My doctor was quite broken down in spirits when he saw me, for the first time since my return, last Saturday. "Good Lord!" he said, recoiling, "seven years younger!"

It is time I should explain the otherwise inexplicable enclosure. Will you tell Fields, with my love, (I suppose he has n't used *all* the pens yet?) that I think there is in Tremont Street a set of my books, sent out by Chapman, not arrived when I departed. Such set of the immortal works of our illustrious, etc., is designed for the gentleman to whom the enclosure is addressed. If T., F., & Co. will kindly forward the set (carriage paid) with the enclosure to ——'s address, I will invoke new blessings on their heads, and will get Dolby's little daughter to mention them nightly.

"No Thoroughfare" is very shortly coming out in Paris, where it is now in active rehearsal. It is still playing here, but without Fechter, who has been very ill. The doctor's dismissal of him to Paris, however, and his getting better there, enables him to get up the play there. He and Wilkie

missed so many pieces of stage effect here, that, unless I am quite satisfied with his report, I shall go over and try my stage-managerial hand at the Vaudeville Theatre. I particularly want the drugging and attempted robbing in the bedroom scene at the Swiss inn to be done to the sound of a waterfall rising and falling with the wind. Although in the very opening of that scene they speak of the waterfall and listen to it, nobody thought of its mysterious music. I could make it, with a good stage carpenter, in an hour. Is it not a curious thing that they want to make me a governor of the Foundling Hospital, because, since the Christmas number, they have had such an amazing access of visitors and money?

My dear love to Fields once again. Same to you and him from M—— and G——. I cannot tell you both how I miss you, or how overjoyed I should be to see you here.

Ever, my dear ——, your most affectionate friend,

C. D.

Excellent accounts of his health and spirits continued to come from Gad's Hill, and his letters were full of plans for the future. On the 7th of July he writes from Gad's Hill as usual: —

GAD'S HILL PLACE, Tuesday, 7th July, 1868.

MY DEAR FIELDS: I have delayed writing to you (and ——, to whom my love) until I should have seen Longfellow. When he was in London the first time he came and went without reporting himself, and left me in a state of unspeakable discomfiture. Indeed, I should not have believed in his having been here at all, if Mrs. Procter had not told me of his calling to see Procter. However, on his return he wrote to me from the Langham Hotel, and I went up to town to see him, and to make an appointment for his coming here. He, the girls, and —— came down last Saturday night, and stayed until Monday forenoon. I showed them all the neighboring country that could be shown in so short

a time, and they finished off with a tour of inspection of the kitchens, pantry, wine-cellar, pickles, sauces, servants' sitting-room, general household stores, and even the Cellar Book, of this illustrious establishment. Forster and Kent (the latter wrote certain verses to Longfellow, which have been published in the "Times," and which I sent to D——) came down for a day, and I hope we all had a really "good time." I turned out a couple of postilions in the old red jacket of the old red royal Dover road, for our ride; and it was like a holiday ride in England fifty years ago. Of course we went to look at the old houses in Rochester, and the old cathedral, and the old castle, and the house for the six poor travellers who, "not being rogues or proctors, shall have lodging, entertainment, and four pence each."

Nothing can surpass the respect paid to Longfellow here, from the Queen downward. He is everywhere received and courted, and finds (as I told him he would, when we talked of it in Boston) the workingmen at least as well acquainted with his books as the classes socially above them. . . . .

Last Thursday I attended, as sponsor, the christening of Dolby's son and heir, — a most jolly baby, who held on tight by the rector's left whisker while the service was performed. What time, too, his little sister, connecting me with the pony, trotted up and down the centre aisle, noisily driving herself as that celebrated animal, so that it went very hard with the sponsorial dignity.

—— is not yet recovered from that concussion of the brain, and I have all his work to do. This may account for my not being able to devise a Christmas number, but I seem to have left my invention in America. In case you should find it, please send it over. I am going up to town to-day to dine with Longfellow. And now, my dear Fields, you know all about me and mine.

You are enjoying your holiday? and are still thinking sometimes of our Boston days, as I do? and are maturing schemes for coming here next summer? A satisfactory reply to the last question is particularly entreated.

I am delighted to find you both so well pleased with the Blind Book scheme. I said nothing of it to you when we were together, though I had made up my mind, because I wanted to come upon you with that little burst from a distance. It seemed something like meeting again when I remitted the money and thought of your talking of it.

The dryness of the weather is amazing. All the ponds and surface wells about here are waterless, and the poor people suffer greatly. The people of this village have only one spring to resort to, and it is a couple of miles from many cottages. I do not let the great dogs swim in the canal, because the people have to drink of it. But when they get into the Medway, it is hard to get them out again. The other day Bumble (the son, Newfoundland dog) got into difficulties among some floating timber, and became frightened. Don (the father) was standing by me, shaking off the wet and looking on carelessly, when all of a sudden he perceived something amiss, and went in with a bound and brought Bumble out by the ear. The scientific way in which he towed him along was charming.

Ever your loving

C. D.

During the summer of 1868 constant messages and letters came from Dickens across the seas, containing pleasant references to his visit in America, and giving charming accounts of his way of life at home. Here is a letter announcing the fact that he had decided to close forever his appearance in the reading-desk; —

LIVERPOOL, Friday, October 30, 1868.

MY DEAR ——: I ought to hàve written to you long ago. But I have begun my one hundred and third Farewell Readings, and have been so busy and so fatigued that my hands have been quite full. Here are Dolby and I again leading the

kind of life that you know so well. We stop next week (except in London) for the month of November, on account of the elections, and then go on again, with a short holiday at Christmas. We have been doing wonders, and the crowds that pour in upon us in London are beyond all precedent or means of providing for. I have serious thoughts of doing the murder from Oliver Twist; but it is so horrible, that I am going to try it on a dozen people in my London hall one night next month, privately, and see what effect it makes.

My reason for abandoning the Christmas number was, that I became weary of having my own writing swamped by that of other people. This reminds me of the Ghost story. I don't think so well of it, my dear Fields, as you do. It seems to me to be too obviously founded on Bill Jones (in Monk Lewis's Tales of Terror), and there is also a remembrance in it of another Sea-Ghost story entitled, I think, "Stand from Under," and written by I don't know whom. *Stand from under* is the cry from aloft when anything is going to be sent down on deck, and the ghost is aloft on a yard. . . . .

You know all about public affairs, Irish churches, and party squabbles. A vast amount of electioneering is going on about here; but it has not hurt us; though Gladstone has been making speeches, north, east, south, and west of us. I hear that C—— is on his way here in the Russia. Gad's Hill must be thrown open. . . . .

Your most affectionate

CHARLES DICKENS.

We had often talked together of the addition to his *répertoire* of some scenes from "Oliver Twist," and the following letter explains itself: —

GLASGOW, Wednesday, December 16, 1868.

MY DEAR ——: . . . . And first, as you are curious about the Oliver murder, I will tell you about that trial of the same at which you *ought* to have assisted. There were

about a hundred people present in all. I have changed my stage. Besides that back screen which you know so well, there are two large screens of the same color, set off, one on either side, like the "wings" at a theatre. And besides those again, we have a quantity of curtains of the same color, with which to close in any width of room from wall to wall. Consequently, the figure is now completely isolated, and the slightest action becomes much more important. This was used for the first time on the occasion. But behind the stage — the orchestra being very large and built for the accommodation of a numerous chorus — there was ready, on the level of the platform, a very long table, beautifully lighted, with a large staff of men ready to open oysters and set champagne corks flying. Directly I had done, the screens being whisked off by my people, there was disclosed one of the prettiest banquets you can imagine; and when all the people came up, and the gay dresses of the ladies were lighted by those powerful lights of mine, the scene was exquisitely pretty; the hall being newly decorated, and very elegantly; and the whole looking like a great bed of flowers and diamonds.

Now, you must know that all this company were, before the wine went round, unmistakably pale, and had horror-stricken faces. Next morning, Harness (Fields knows — Rev. William — did an edition of Shakespeare — old friend of the Kembles and Mrs. Siddons), writing to me about it, and saying it was "a most amazing and terrific thing," added, "but I am bound to tell you that I had an almost irresistible impulse upon me to *scream*, and that, if any one had cried out, I am certain I should have followed." He had no idea that on the night P——, the great ladies' doctor, had taken me aside and said, "My dear Dickens, you may rely upon it that if only one woman cries out when you murder the girl, there will be a contagion of hysteria all over this place." It is impossible to soften it without spoiling it, and you may suppose that I am rather anxious to discover how it goes on the 5th of January!!! We are

afraid to announce it elsewhere, without knowing, except that I have thought it pretty safe to put it up once in Dublin. I asked Mrs. K——, the famous actress, who was at the experiment: "What do *you* say? Do it, or not?" "Why, of course, do it," she replied. "Having got at such an effect as that, it must be done. But," rolling her large black eyes very slowly, and speaking very distinctly, "the public have been looking out for a sensation these last fifty years or so, and by Heaven they have got it!" With which words, and a long breath and a long stare, she became speechless. Again, you may suppose that I am a little anxious! I had previously tried it, merely sitting over the fire in a chair, upon two ladies separately, one of whom was G——. They had both said, "O, good gracious! if you are going to do *that*, it ought to be seen; but it 's awful." So once again you may suppose I am a little anxious! . . . .

Not a day passes but Dolby and I talk about you both, and recall where we were at the corresponding time of last year. My old likening of Boston to Edinburgh has been constantly revived within these last ten days. There is a certain remarkable similarity of *tone* between the two places. The audiences are curiously alike, except that the Edinburgh audience has a quicker sense of humor and is a little more genial. No disparagement to Boston in this, because I consider an Edinburgh audience perfect.

I trust, my dear Eugenius, that you have recognized yourself in a certain Uncommercial, and also some small reference to a name rather dear to you? As an instance of how strangely something comic springs up in the midst of the direst misery, look to a succeeding Uncommercial, called "A Small Star in the East," published to-day, by the by. I have described, *with exactness*, the poor places into which I went, and how the people behaved, and what they said. I was wretched, looking on; and yet the boiler-maker and the poor man with the legs filled me with a sense of drollery not to be kept down by any pressure.

The atmosphere of this place, compounded of mists from the highlands and smoke from the town factories, is crushing my eyebrows as I write, and it rains as it never does rain anywhere else, and always does rain here. It is a dreadful place, though much improved and possessing a deal of public spirit. Improvement is beginning to knock the old town of Edinburgh about, here and there; but the Canongate and the most picturesque of the horrible courts and wynds are not to be easily spoiled, or made fit for the poor wretches who people them to live in. Edinburgh is so changed as to its notabilities, that I had the only three men left of the Wilson and Jeffrey time to dine with me there, last Saturday.

I read here to-night and to-morrow, go back to Edinburgh on Friday morning, read there on Saturday morning, and start southward by the mail that same night. After the great experiment of the 5th, — that is to say, on the morning of the 6th, — we are off to Belfast and Dublin. On every alternate Tuesday I am due in London, from wheresoever I may be, to read at St. James's Hall.

I think you will find "Fatal Zero" (by Percy Fitzgerald) a very curious analysis of a mind, as the story advances. A new beginner in A. Y. R. (Hon. Mrs. Clifford, Kinglake's sister), who wrote a story in the series just finished, called "The Abbot's Pool," has just sent me another story. I have a strong impression that, with care, she will step into Mrs. Gaskell's vacant place. W—— is no better, and I have work enough even in that direction.

God bless the woman with the black mittens, for making me laugh so this morning! I take her to be a kind of public-spirited Mrs. Sparsit, and as such take her to my bosom. God bless you both, my dear friends, in this Christmas and New Year time, and in all times, seasons, and places, and send you to Gad's Hill with the next flowers!

Ever your most affectionate

C. D.

All who witnessed the reading of Dickens in the "Oliver Twist" murder scene unite in testifying to the wonderful effect he produced in it. Old theatrical *habitués* have told me that, since the days of Edmund Kean and Cooper, no mimetic representation had been superior to it. I became so much interested in all I heard about it, that I resolved early in the year 1869 to step across the water (it is only a stride of three thousand miles) and see it done. The following is Dickens's reply to my announcement of the intended voyage: —

A. Y. R. Office, London,
Monday, February 15, 1869.

My dear Fields: Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah! It is a remarkable instance of magnetic sympathy that before I received your joyfully welcomed announcement of your probable visit to England, I was waiting for the enclosed card to be printed, that I might send you a clear statement of my Readings. I felt almost convinced that you would arrive before the Farewells were over. What do you say to *that?*

The final course of Four Readings in a week, mentioned in the enclosed card, is arranged to come off, on

Monday, June 7th;
Tuesday, June 8th;
Thursday, June 10th; and
Friday, June 11th: last night of all.

We hoped to have finished in May, but cannot clear the country off in sufficient time. I shall probably be about the Lancashire towns in that month. There are to be three morning murders in London not yet announced, but they will be extra the London nights I send you, and will in no wise interfere with them. We are doing most amazingly.

In the country the people usually collapse with the murder, and don't fully revive in time for the final piece; in London, where they are much quicker, they are equal to both. It is very hard work; but I have never for a moment lost voice or been unwell; except that my foot occasionally gives me a twinge. We shall have in London on the 2d of March, for the second murder night, probably the greatest assemblage of notabilities of all sorts ever packed together. D—— continues steady in his allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, sends his kindest regard, and is immensely excited by the prospect of seeing you. Gad's Hill is all ablaze on the subject. We are having such wonderfully warm weather that I fear we shall have a backward spring there. You 'll excuse east-winds, won't you, if they shake the flowers roughly when you first set foot on the lawn? I have only seen it once since Christmas, and that was from last Saturday to Monday, when I went there for my birthday, and had the Forsters and Wilkie to keep it. I had had ——'s letter four days before, and drank to you both most heartily and lovingly.

I was with M—— a week or two ago. He is quite surprisingly infirm and aged. Could not possibly get on without his second wife to take care of him, which she does to perfection. I went to Cheltenham expressly to do the murder for him, and we put him in the front row, where he sat grimly staring at me. After it was over, he thus delivered himself, on my laughing it off and giving him some wine: "No, Dickens — er — er — I will NOT," with sudden emphasis, — "er — have it — er — put aside. In my — er — best times — er — you remember them, my dear boy — er — gone, gone! — no," — with great emphasis again, — "it comes to this — er — TWO MACBETHS!" with extraordinary energy. After which he stood (with his glass in his hand and his old square jaw of its old fierce form) looking defiantly at Dolby as if Dolby had contradicted him; and then trailed off into a weak pale likeness of himself as if his whole appearance had been some clever optical illusion.

I am away to Scotland on Wednesday next, the 17th, to finish there. Ireland is already disposed of, and Manchester and Liverpool will follow within six weeks. "Like lights in a theatre, they are being snuffed out fast," as Carlyle says of the guillotined in his Revolution. I suppose I shall be glad when they are all snuffed out. Anyhow, I think so *now*.

The N——s have a very pretty house at Kensington. He has quite recovered, and is positively getting fat. I dined with them last Friday at F——'s, having (marvellous to relate!) a spare day in London. The warm weather has greatly spared F——'s bronchitis; but I fear that he is quite unable to bear cold, or even changes of temperature, and that he will suffer exceedingly if east-winds obtain. One would say they must at last, for it has been blowing a tempest from the south and southwest for weeks and weeks.

The safe arrival of my boy's ship in Australia has been telegraphed home, but I have not yet heard from him. His post will be due a week or so hence in London. My next boy is doing very well, I hope, at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Of my seafaring boy's luck in getting a death-vacancy of First Lieutenant, aboard a new ship-of-war on the South American Station, I heard from a friend, a captain in the Navy, when I was at Bath the other day; though we have not yet heard it from himself. Bath (setting aside remembrances of Roderick Random and Humphrey Clinker) looked, I fancied, just as if a cemetery-full of old people had somehow made a successful rise against death, carried the place by assault, and built a city with their gravestones; in which they were trying to look alive, but with very indifferent success.

C—— is no better, and no worse. M—— and G—— send all manner of loves, and have already represented to me that the red-jacketed post-boys must be turned out for a summer expedition to Canterbury, and that there must be lunches among the cornfields, walks in Cobham Park, and a thousand other expeditions. Pray give our pretty M—— to

understand that a great deal will be expected of her, and that she will have to look her very best, to look as I have drawn her. If your Irish people turn up at Gad's at the same time, as they probably will, they shall be entertained in the yard, with muzzled dogs. I foresee that they will come over, haymaking and hopping, and will recognize their beautiful vagabonds at a glance.

I wish Reverdy Johnson would dine in private and hold his tongue. He overdoes the thing. C—— is trying to get the Pope to subscribe, and to run over to take the chair at his next dinner, on which occasion Victor Emmanuel is to propose C——'s health, and may all differences among friends be referred to him. With much love always, and in high rapture at the thought of seeing you both here,

Ever your most affectionate

C. D.

A few weeks later, while on his reading tour, he sent off the following: —

ADELPHI HOTEL, LIVERPOOL, Friday, April 9, 1869.

MY DEAR FIELDS: The faithful Russia will bring this out to you, as a sort of warrant to take you into loving custody and bring you back on her return trip.

I have been "reading" here all this week, and finish here for good to-night. To-morrow the Mayor, Corporation, and citizens give me a farewell dinner in St. George's Hall. Six hundred and fifty are to dine, and a mighty show of beauty is to be mustered besides. N—— had a great desire to see the sight, and so I suggested him as a friend to be invited. He is over at Manchester now on a visit, and will come here at midday to-morrow, and go back to London with us on Sunday afternoon. On Tuesday I read in London, and on Wednesday start off again. To-night is No. 68 out of one hundred. I am very tired of it, but I could have no such good fillip as you among the audience, and that will carry me on gayly to the end. So please to

look sharp in the matter of landing on the bosom of the used-up, worn-out, and rotten old Parient.

I rather think that when the 12th of June shall have shaken off these shackles, there *will* be borage on the lawn at Gad's. Your heart's desire in that matter, and in the minor particulars of Cobham Park, Rochester Castle, and Canterbury shall be fulfilled, please God! The red jackets shall turn out again upon the turnpike road, and picnics among the cherry-orchards and hop-gardens shall be heard of in Kent. Then, too, shall the Uncommercial resuscitate (being at present nightly murdered by Mr. W. Sikes) and uplift his voice again.

The chief officer of the Russia (a capital fellow) was at the Reading last night, and Dolby specially charged him with the care of you and yours. We shall be on the borders of Wales, and probably about Hereford, when you arrive. Dolby has insane projects of getting over here to meet you; so amiably hopeful and obviously impracticable, that I encourage him to the utmost. The regular little captain of the Russia, Cook, is just now changed into the Cuba, whence arise disputes of seniority, etc. I wish he had been with you, for I liked him very much when I was his passenger. I like to think of your being in *my* ship!

—— and —— have been taking it by turns to be "on the point of death," and have been complimenting one another greatly on the fineness of the point attained. My people got a very good impression of ——, and thought her a sincere and earnest little woman.

The Russia hauls out into the stream to-day, and I fear her people may be too busy to come to us to-night. But if any of them do, they shall have the warmest of welcomes for your sake. (By the by, a very good party of seamen from the Queen's ship Donegal, lying in the Mersey, have been told off to decorate St. George's Hall with the ship's bunting. They were all hanging on aloft upside down, holding to the gigantically high roof by nothing, this morning, in the most wonderfully cheerful manner.)

My son Charley has come for the dinner, and Chappell (my Proprietor, as — is n't it Wemmick? — says) is coming to-day, and Lord Dufferin (Mrs. Norton's nephew) is to come and make *the* speech. I don't envy the feelings of my noble friend when he sees the hall. Seriously, it is less adapted to speaking than Westminster Abbey, and is as large. . . . .

I hope you will see Fechter in a really clever piece by Wilkie. Also you will see the Academy Exhibition, which will be a very good one; and also we will, please God, see everything and more, and everything else after that. I begin to doubt and fear on the subject of your having a horror of me after seeing the murder. I don't think a hand moved while I was doing it last night, or an eye looked away. And there was a fixed expression of horror of me, all over the theatre, which could not have been surpassed if I had been going to be hanged to that red velvet table. It is quite a new sensation to be execrated with that unanimity; and I hope it will remain so!

[Is it lawful — would that woman in the black gaiters, green veil, and spectacles, hold it so — to send my love to the pretty M—— ?]

Pack up, my dear Fields, and be quick.

Ever your most affectionate

C. D.

It will be remembered that Dickens broke down entirely during the month of April, being completely worn out with hard work in the Readings. He described to me with graphic earnestness, when we met in May, all the incidents connected with the final crisis, and I shall never forget how he imitated himself during that last Reading, when he nearly fell before the audience. It was a terrible blow to his constitution, and only a man of the

greatest strength and will could have survived it. When we arrived in Queenstown, this note was sent on board our steamer.

Loving welcome to England. Hurrah!

OFFICE OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND,
Wednesday, May 5, 1869.

MY DEAR ——: I fear you will have been uneasy about me, and will have heard distorted accounts of the stoppage of my Readings. It is a measure of precaution and not of cure. I was too tired and too jarred by the railway fast express, travelling night and day. No half-measure could be taken; and rest being medically considered essential, we stopped. I became, thank God, myself again, almost as soon as I could rest! I am good for all country pleasures with you, and am looking forward to Gad's, Rochester Castle, Cobham Park, red jackets, and Canterbury. When you come to London we shall probably be staying at our hotel. You will learn, *here*, where to find us. I yearn to be with you both again!

Love to M——.

Ever your affectionate

C. D.

I hope this will be put into your hands on board, in Queenstown Harbor.

We met in London a few days after this, and I found him in capital spirits, with such a protracted list of things we were to do together, that, had I followed out the prescribed programme, it would have taken many more months of absence from home than I had proposed to myself. We began our long rambles among the thoroughfares that had undergone important changes since I was last in

London, taking in the noble Thames embankments, which I had never seen, and the improvements in the city markets. Dickens had moved up to London for the purpose of showing us about, and had taken rooms only a few streets off from our hotel. Here are two specimens of the welcome little notes which I constantly found on my breakfast-table: —

OFFICE OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND, LONDON,
Wednesday, May 19, 1869.

MY DEAR FIELDS: Suppose we give the weather a longer chance, and say Monday instead of Friday. I think we must be safer with that precaution. If Monday will suit you, I propose that we meet here that day, — your ladies and you and I, — and cast ourselves on the stony-hearted streets. If it be bright for St. Paul's, good; if not, we can take some other lion that roars in dull weather. We will dine here at six, and meet here at half past two. So IF you should want to go elsewhere after dinner, it can be done, notwithstanding. Let me know in a line what you say.

O the delight of a cold bath this morning, after those lodging-houses! And a mild sniffler of punch, on getting into the hotel last night, I found what my friend Mr. Wegg calls, "Mellering, sir, very mellering."

With kindest regards, ever affectionately,
CHARLES DICKENS.

OFFICE OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND, LONDON,
Tuesday, May 25, 1869.

MY DEAR FIELDS: First, you leave Charing Cross Station, by North Kent railway, on Wednesday, June 2d, at 2.10 for Higham Station, the next station beyond Gravesend. Now, bring your lofty mind back to the previous Saturday, next Saturday. There is only one way of combining Windsor and Richmond. That way will leave us but two hours and a

half at Windsor. This would not be long enough to enable us to see the inside of the castle, but would admit of our seeing the outside, the Long Walk, etc. I will assume that such a survey will suffice. That taken for granted, meet me at Waterloo Terminus (Loop Line for Windsor) at 10.35, on Saturday morning.

The rendezvous for Monday evening will be *here at half past eight.* As I don't know Mr. Eytinge's number in Guildford Street, will you kindly undertake to let him know that we are going out with the great Detective? And will you also give him the time and place for Gad's?

I shall be here on Friday for a few hours; meantime at Gad's aforesaid.

With love to the ladies, ever faithfully,

C. D.

During my stay in England in that summer of 1869, I made many excursions with Dickens both around the city and into the country. Among the most memorable of these London rambles was a visit to the General Post-Office, by arrangement with the authorities there, a stroll among the cheap theatres and lodging-houses for the poor, a visit to Furnival's Inn and the very room in it where "Pickwick" was written, and a walk through the thieves' quarter. Two of these expeditions were made on two consecutive nights, under the protection of police detailed for the service. On one of these nights we also visited the lock-up houses, watch-houses, and opium-eating establishments. It was in one of the horrid opium-dens that he gathered the incidents which he has related in the opening pages of "Edwin Drood." In a miserable court we

found the haggard old woman blowing at a kind of pipe made of an old penny ink-bottle. The identical words which Dickens puts into the mouth of this wretched creature in "Edwin Drood" we heard her croon as we leaned over the tattered bed on which she was lying. There was something hideous in the way this woman kept repeating, "Ye 'll pay up according, deary, won't ye?" and the Chinamen and Lascars made never-to-be-forgotten pictures in the scene. I watched Dickens intently as he went among these outcasts of London, and saw with what deep sympathy he encountered the sad and suffering in their horrid abodes. At the door of one of the penny lodging-houses (it was growing toward morning, and the raw air almost cut one to the bone), I saw him snatch a little child out of its poor drunken mother's arms, and bear it in, filthy as it was, that it might be warmed and cared for. I noticed that whenever he entered one of these wretched rooms he had a word of cheer for its inmates, and that when he left the apartment he always had a pleasant "Good night" or "God bless you" to bestow upon them. I do not think his person was ever recognized in any of these haunts, except in one instance. As we entered a low room in the worst alley we had yet visited, in which were huddled together some forty or fifty half-starved-looking wretches, I noticed a man among the crowd whispering to another and

pointing out Dickens. Both men regarded him with marked interest all the time he remained in the room, and tried to get as near him, without observation, as possible. As he turned to go out, one of these men pressed forward and said, "Good night, sir," with much feeling, in reply to Dickens's parting word.

Among other places, we went, a little past midnight, into one of the Casual Wards, which were so graphically described, some years ago, in an English magazine, by a gentleman who, as a pretended tramp, went in on a reporting expedition. We walked through an avenue of poor tired sleeping forms, all lying flat on the floor, and not one of them raised a head to look at us as we moved thoughtfully up the aisle of sorrowful humanity. I think we counted sixty or seventy prostrate beings, who had come in for a night's shelter, and had lain down worn out with fatigue and hunger. There was one pale young face to which I whispered Dickens's attention, and he stood over it with a look of sympathizing interest not to be easily forgotten. There was much ghastly comicality mingled with the horror in several of the places we visited on those two nights. We were standing in a room half filled with people of both sexes, whom the police accompanying us knew to be thieves. Many of these abandoned persons had served out their terms in jail or prison, and would probably be again sentenced

under the law. They were all silent and sullen as we entered the room, until an old woman spoke up with a strong, beery voice: "Good evening, gentlemen. We are all wery poor, but strictly honest." At which cheerful apocryphal statement, all the inmates of the room burst into boisterous laughter, and began pelting the imaginative female with epithets uncomplimentary and unsavory. Dickens's quick eye never for a moment ceased to study all these scenes of vice and gloom, and he told me afterwards that, bad as the whole thing was, it had improved infinitely since he first began to study character in those regions of crime and woe.

Between eleven and twelve o'clock on one of the evenings I have mentioned we were taken by Dickens's favorite Detective W—— into a sort of lock-up house, where persons are brought from the streets who have been engaged in brawls, or detected in the act of thieving, or who have, in short, committed any offence against the laws. Here they are examined for commitment by a sort of presiding officer, who sits all night for that purpose. We looked into some of the cells, and found them nearly filled with wretched-looking objects who had been brought in that night. To this establishment are also brought lost children who are picked up in the streets by the police, — children who have wandered away from their homes, and are not old enough to tell the magistrate where they live. It

was well on toward morning, and we were sitting in conversation with one of the officers, when the ponderous door opened and one of these small wanderers was brought in. She was the queerest little figure I ever beheld, and she walked in, holding the police officer by the hand as solemnly and quietly as if she were attending her own obsequies. She was between four and five years old, and had on what was evidently her mother's bonnet, — an enormous production, resembling a sort of coal-scuttle, manufactured after the fashion of ten or fifteen years ago. The child had, no doubt, caught up this wonderful head-gear in the absence of her parent, and had gone forth in quest of adventure. The officer reported that he had discovered her in the middle of the street, moving ponderingly along, without any regard to the horses and vehicles all about her. When asked where she lived, she mentioned a street which only existed in her own imagination, and she knew only her Christian name. When she was interrogated by the proper authorities, without the slightest apparent discomposure she replied in a steady voice, as she thought proper, to their questions. The magistrate inadvertently repeated a question as to the number of her brothers and sisters, and the child snapped out, "I told ye wunst; can't ye hear?" When asked if she would like anything, she gayly answered, "Candy, cake and *candy*." A messenger was sent out to

procure these commodities, which she instantly seized on their arrival and began to devour. She showed no signs of fear, until one of the officers untied the huge bonnet and took it off, when she tearfully insisted upon being put into it again. I was greatly impressed by the ingenious efforts of the excellent men in the room to learn from the child where she lived, and who her parents were. Dickens sat looking at the little figure with profound interest, and soon came forward and asked permission to speak with the child. Of course his request was granted, and I don't know when I have enjoyed a conversation more. She made some very smart answers, which convulsed us all with laughter as we stood looking on; and the creator of "little Nell" and "Paul Dombey" gave her up in despair. He was so much interested in the little vagrant, that he sent a messenger next morning to learn if the rightful owner of the bonnet had been found. Report came back, on a duly printed form, setting forth that the anxious father and mother had applied for the child at three o'clock in the morning, and had borne her away in triumph to her home.

It was a warm summer afternoon towards the close of the day, when Dickens went with us to visit the London Post-Office. He said: "I know nothing which could give a stranger a better idea

of the size of London than that great institution. The hurry and rush of letters! men up to their chin in letters! nothing but letters everywhere! the air full of letters! — suddenly the clock strikes; not a person is to be seen, *nor* a letter: only one man with a lantern peering about and putting one drop-letter into a box." For two hours we went from room to room, with him as our guide, up stairs and down stairs, observing the myriad clerks at their various avocations, with letters for the North Pole, for the South Pole, for Egypt and Alaska, Darien and the next street.

The "Blind Man," as he was called, appeared to afford Dickens as much amusement as if he saw his work then for the first time; but this was one of the qualities of his genius; there was inexhaustibility and freshness in everything to which he turned his attention. The ingenuity and loving care shown by the "Blind Man" in deciphering or guessing at the apparently inexplicable addresses on letters and parcels excited his admiration. "What a lesson to all of us," he could not help saying, "to be careful in preparing our letters for the mail!" His own were always directed with such exquisite care, however, that had he been brother to the "Blind Man," and considered it his special work in life to teach others how to save that officer trouble, he could hardly have done better.

Leaving the hurry and bustle of the Post-Office

behind us, we strolled out into the streets of London. It was past eight o'clock, but the beauty of the soft June sunset was only then overspreading the misty heavens. Every sound of traffic had died out of those turbulent thoroughfares; now and then a belated figure would hurry past us and disappear, or perhaps in turning the corner would linger to "take a good look" at Charles Dickens. But even these stragglers soon dispersed, leaving us alone in the light of day and the sweet living air to heighten the sensation of a dream. We came through White Friars to the Temple, and thence into the Temple Garden, where our very voices echoed. Dickens pointed up to Talfourd's room, and recalled with tenderness the merry hours they had passed together in the old place. Of course we hunted out Goldsmith's abode, and Dr. Johnson's, saw the site of the Earl of Essex's palace, and the steps by which he was wont to descend to the river, now so far removed. But most interesting of all to us there was "Pip's" room, to which Dickens led us, and the staircase where the convict stumbled up in the dark, and the chimney nearest the river where, although less exposed than in "Pip's" days, we could well understand how "the wind shook the house that night like discharges of cannon, or breakings of a sea." We looked in at the dark old staircase, so dark on that night when "the lamps were blown out, and the lamps on the

bridges and the shore were shuddering," and then went on to take a peep, half shuddering ourselves, at the narrow street where "Pip" by and by found a lodging for the convict. Nothing dark could long survive in our minds on that June night, when the whole scene was so like the airy work of imagination. Past the Temple, past the garden to the river, mistily fair, with a few boats moving upon its surface, the convict's story was forgotten, and we only knew this was Dickens's home, where he had lived and written, lying in the calm light of its fairest mood.

Dickens had timed our visit to his country house in Kent, and arranged that we should appear at Gad's Hill with the nightingales. Arriving at the Higham station on a bright June day in 1869, we found his stout little pony ready to take us up the hill; and before we had proceeded far on the road, the master himself came out to welcome us on the way. He looked brown and hearty, and told us he had passed a breezy morning writing in the châlet. We had parted from him only a few days before in London, but I thought the country air had already begun to exert its strengthening influence, — a process he said which commonly set in the moment he reached his garden gate.

It was ten years since I had seen Gad's Hill

Place, and I observed at once what extensive improvements had been made during that period. Dickens had increased his estate by adding quite a large tract of land on the opposite side of the road, and a beautiful meadow at the back of the house. He had connected the front lawn, by a passageway running under the road, with beautifully wooded grounds, on which was erected the Swiss châlet, a present from Fechter. The old house, too, had been greatly improved, and there was an air of assured comfort and ease about the charming establishment. No one could surpass Dickens as a host; and as there were certain household rules (hours for meals, recreation, etc.), he at once announced them, so that visitors never lost any time "wondering" when this or that was to happen.

Lunch over, we were taken round to see the dogs, and Dickens gave us a rapid biographical account of each as we made acquaintance with the whole colony. One old fellow, who had grown superannuated and nearly blind, raised himself up and laid his great black head against Dickens's breast as if he loved him. All were spoken to with pleasant words of greeting, and the whole troop seemed wild with joy over the master's visit. "Linda" put up her shaggy paw to be shaken at parting; and as we left the dog-houses, our host told us some amusing anecdotes of his favorite friends.

Dickens's admiration of Hogarth was unbounded,

and he had hung the staircase leading up from the hall of his house with fine old impressions of the great master's best works. Observing our immediate interest in these pictures, he seemed greatly pleased, and proceeded at once to point out in his graphic way what had struck his own fancy most in Hogarth's genius. He had made a study of the painter's *thought* as displayed in these works, and his talk about the artist was delightful. He used to say he never came down the stairs without pausing with new wonder over the fertility of the mind that had conceived and the hand that had executed these powerful pictures of human life; and I cannot forget with what fervid energy and feeling he repeated one day, as we were standing together on the stairs in front of the Hogarth pictures, Dr. Johnson's epitaph on the painter: —

> "The hand of him here torpid lies,
> That drew the essential form of grace;
> Here closed in death the attentive eyes
> That saw the manners in the face."

Every day we had out-of-door games, such as "Bowls," "Aunt Sally," and the like, Dickens leading off with great spirit and fun. Billiards came after dinner, and during the evening we had charades and dancing. There was no end to the new divertisements our kind host was in the habit of proposing, so that constant cheerfulness reigned at Gad's Hill. He went into his work-room, as he

called it, soon after breakfast, and wrote till twelve o'clock; then he came out, ready for a long walk. The country about Gad's Hill is admirably adapted for pedestrian exercise, and we went forth every day, rain or shine, for a stretcher. Twelve, fifteen, even twenty miles were not too much for Dickens, and many a long tramp we have had over the hop-country together. Chatham, Rochester, Cobham Park, Maidstone, — anywhere, out under the open sky and into the free air! Then Dickens was at his best, and talked. Swinging his blackthorn stick, his lithe figure sprang forward over the ground, and it took a practised pair of legs to keep alongside of his voice. In these expeditions I heard from his own lips delightful reminiscences of his early days in the region we were then traversing, and charming narratives of incidents connected with the writing of his books.

Dickens's association with Gad's Hill, the city of Rochester, the road to Canterbury, and the old cathedral town itself, dates back to his earliest years. In "David Copperfield," the most autobiographic of all his books, we find him, a little boy, (so small, that the landlady is called to peer over the counter and catch a glimpse of the tiny lad who possesses such "a spirit,") trudging over the old Kent Road to Dover. "I see myself," he writes, "as evening closes in, coming over the bridge at Rochester, footsore and tired, and eating

bread that I had bought for supper. One or two little houses, with the notice, 'Lodgings for Travellers,' hanging out, had tempted me; but I was afraid of spending the few pence I had, and was even more afraid of the vicious looks of the trampers I had met or overtaken. I sought no shelter, therefore, but the sky; and toiling into Chatham, — which in that night's aspect is a mere dream of chalk, and drawbridges, and mastless ships in a muddy river, roofed like Noah's arks, — crept, at last, upon a sort of grass-grown battery overhanging a lane, where a sentry was walking to and fro. Here I lay down near a cannon; and, happy in the society of the sentry's footsteps, though he knew no more of my being above him than the boys at Salem House had known of my lying by the wall, slept soundly until morning." Thus early he noticed "the trampers" which infest the old Dover Road, and observed them in their numberless gypsy-like variety; thus early he looked lovingly on Gad's Hill Place, and wished it might be his own, if he ever grew up to be a man. His earliest memories were filled with pictures of the endless hop-grounds and orchards, and the little child "thought it all extremely beautiful!"

Through the long years of his short life he was always consistent in his love for Kent and the old surroundings. When the after days came and while travelling abroad, how vividly the childish

love returned! As he passed rapidly over the road on his way to France he once wrote: "Midway between Gravesend and Rochester the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

"'Halloa!' said I to the very queer small boy, 'where do you live?'

"'At Chatham,' says he.

"'What do you do there?' said I.

"'I go to school,' says he.

"I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently the very queer small boy says, 'This is Gad's Hill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers, and ran away.'

"'You know something about Falstaff, eh?' said I.

"'All about him,' said the very queer small boy. 'I am old (I am nine) and I read all sorts of books. But *do* let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!'

"'You admire that house,' said I.

"'Bless you, sir,' said the very queer small boy, 'when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now I am nine, I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, "If you were to be very persevering and were to work

hard, you might some day come to live in it." Though that 's impossible!' said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of window with all his might. I was rather annoyed to be told this by the very queer small boy; for that house happens to be *my* house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true."

What stay-at-home is there who does not know the Bull Inn at Rochester, from which Mr. Tupman and Mr. Jingle attended the ball, Mr. Jingle wearing Mr. Winkle's coat? or who has not seen in fancy the "gypsy-tramp," the "show-tramp," the "cheap jack," the "tramp-children," and the "Irish hoppers" all passing over "the Kentish Road, bordered" in their favorite resting-place "on either side by a wood, and having on one hand, between the road-dust and the trees, a skirting patch of grass? Wild-flowers grow in abundance on this spot, and it lies high and airy, with the distant river stealing steadily away to the ocean, like a man's life."

Sitting in the beautiful châlet during his later years and watching this same river stealing away like his own life, he never could find a harsh word for the tramps, and many and many a one has gone over the road rejoicing because of some kindness received from his hands. Every precaution was taken to protect a house exposed as his was to these

wild rovers, several dogs being kept in the stable-yard, and the large outer gates locked. But he seldom made an excursion in any direction without finding some opportunity to benefit them. One of these many kindnesses came to the public ear during the last summer of his life. He was dressing in his own bedroom in the morning, when he saw two Savoyards and two bears come up to the Falstaff Inn opposite. While he was watching the odd company, two English bullies joined the little party and insisted upon taking the muzzles off the bears in order to have a dance with them. "At once," said Dickens, "I saw there would be trouble, and I watched the scene with the greatest anxiety. In a moment I saw how things were going, and without delay I found myself at the gate. I called the gardener by the way, but he managed to hold himself at safe distance behind the fence. I put the Savoyards instantly in a secure position, asked the bullies what they were at, forced them to muzzle the bears again, under threat of sending for the police, and ended the whole affair in so short a time that I was not missed from the house. Unfortunately, while I was covered with dust and blood, for the bears had already attacked one of the men when I arrived, I heard a carriage roll by. I thought nothing of it at the time, but the report in the foreign journals which startled and shocked my friends so much came probably from the occupants of that vehicle.

Unhappily, in my desire to save the men, I entirely forgot the dogs, and ordered the bears to be carried into the stable-yard until the scuffle should be over, when a tremendous tumult arose between the bears and the dogs. Fortunately we were able to separate them without injury, and the whole was so soon over that it was hard to make the family believe, when I came in to breakfast, that anything of the kind had gone forward." It was the newspaper report, causing anxiety to some absent friends, which led, on inquiry, to this rehearsal of the incident.

Who does not know Cobham Park? Has Dickens not invited us there in the old days to meet Mr. Pickwick, who pronounced it "delightful!—thoroughly delightful," while "the skin of his expressive countenance was rapidly peeling off with exposure to the sun"? Has he not invited the world to enjoy the loveliness of its solitudes with him, and peopled its haunts for us again and again?

Our first *real* visit to Cobham Park was on a summer morning when Dickens walked out with us from his own gate, and, strolling quietly along the road, turned at length into what seemed a rural wooded pathway. At first we did not associate the spot in its spring freshness with that morning after Christmas when he had supped with the "Seven Poor Travellers," and lain awake all night with thinking of them; and after parting in the morn-

ing with a kindly shake of the hand all round, started to walk through Cobham woods on his way towards London. Then on his lonely road, "the mists began to rise in the most beautiful manner and the sun to shine; and as I went on," he writes, "through the bracing air, seeing the hoar-frost sparkle everywhere, I felt as if all nature shared in the joy of the great Birthday. Going through the woods, the softness of my tread upon the mossy ground and among the brown leaves enhanced the Christmas sacredness by which I felt surrounded. As the whitened stems environed me, I thought how the Founder of the time had never raised his benignant hand, save to bless and heal, except in the case of one unconscious tree."

Now we found ourselves on the same ground, surrounded by the full beauty of the summer-time. The hand of Art conspiring with Nature had planted rhododendrons, as if in their native soil beneath the forest trees. They were in one universal flame of blossoms, as far as the eye could see. Lord and Lady D——, the kindest and most hospitable of neighbors, were absent; there was not a living figure beside ourselves to break the solitude, and we wandered on and on with the wild birds for companions as in our native wildernesses. By and by we came near Cobham Hall, with its fine lawns and far-sweeping landscape, and workmen and gardeners and a general air of summer

luxury. But to-day we were to go past the hall and lunch on a green slope under the trees, (was it *just* the spot where Mr. Pickwick tried the cold punch and found it satisfactory? I never liked to ask!) and after making the old woods ring with the clatter and clink of our noontide meal, mingled with floods of laughter, were to come to the village, and to the very inn from which the disconsolate Mr. Tupman wrote to Mr. Pickwick, after his adventure with Miss Wardle. There is the old sign, and here we are at the Leather Bottle, Cobham, Kent. "There 's no doubt whatever about that." Dickens's modesty would not allow him to go in, so we made the most of an outside study of the quaint old place as we strolled by; also of the cottages whose inmates were evidently no strangers to our party, but were cared for by them as English cottagers are so often looked after by the kindly ladies in their neighborhood. And there was the old churchyard, "where the dead had been quietly buried 'in the sure and certain hope' which Christmas-time inspired." There too were the children, whom, seeing at their play, he could not but be loving, remembering who had loved them! One party of urchins swinging on a gate reminded us vividly of Collins, the painter. Here was his composition to the life. Every lover of rural scenery must recall the little fellow on the top of a five-barred gate in the picture Collins painted, known widely by the

fine engraving made of it at the time. And there too were the blossoming gardens, which now shone in their new garments of resurrection. The stillness of midsummer noon crept over everything as we lingered in the sun and shadow of the old village. Slowly circling the hall, we came upon an avenue of lime-trees leading up to a stately doorway in the distance. The path was overgrown, birds and squirrels were hopping unconcernedly over the ground, and the gates and chains were rusty with disuse. "This avenue," said Dickens, as we leaned upon the wall and looked into its cool shadows, "is never crossed except to bear the dead body of the lord of the hall to its last resting-place; a remnant of superstition, and one which Lord and Lady D—— would be glad to do away with, but the villagers would never hear of such a thing, and would consider it certain death to any person who should go or come through this entrance. It would be a highly unpopular movement for the present occupants to attempt to uproot this absurd idea, and they have given up all thoughts of it for the time."

It was on a subsequent visit to Cobham village that we explored the "College," an old foundation of the reign of Edward III. for the aged poor of both sexes. Each occupant of the various small apartments was sitting at his or her door, which opened on a grassy enclosure with arches like an abandoned cloister of some old cathedral. Such a

motley society, brought together under such unnatural circumstances, would of course interest Dickens. He seemed to take a profound pleasure in wandering about the place, which was evidently filled with the associations of former visits in his own mind. He was usually possessed by a child-like eagerness to go to any spot which he had made up his mind it was best to visit, and quick to come away, but he lingered long about this leafy old haunt on that Sunday afternoon.

Of Cobham Hall itself much might be written without conveying an adequate idea of its peculiar interest to this generation. The terraces, and lawns, and cedar-trees, and deer park, the names of Edward III. and Elizabeth, the famous old Cobhams and their long line of distinguished descendants, their invaluable pictures and historic chapel, have all been the common property of the past and of the present. But the air of comfort and hospitality diffused about the place by the present owners belongs exclusively to our time, and a little Swiss châlet removed from Gad's Hill, standing not far from the great house, will always connect the name of Charles Dickens with the place he loved so well. The châlet has been transferred thither as a tribute from the Dickens family to the kindness of their friends and former neighbors. We could not fail, during our visit, to think of the connection his name would always have with Cobham Hall, though

he was then still by our side, and the little châlet yet remained embowered in its own green trees, overlooking the sail-dotted Medway as it flowed towards the Thames.

The old city of Rochester, to which we have already referred as being particularly well known to all Mr. Pickwick's admirers, is within walking distance from Gad's Hill Place, and was the object of daily visits from its occupants. The ancient castle, one of the best ruins in England, as Dickens loved to say, because less has been done to it, rises with rugged walls precipitously from the river. It is wholly unrestored; just enough care has been bestowed to prevent its utter destruction, but otherwise it stands as it has stood and crumbled from year to year. We climbed painfully up to the highest steep of its loftiest tower, and looked down on the wonderful scene spread out in the glory of a summer sunset. Below, a clear trickling stream flowed and tinkled as it has done since the rope was first lowered in the year 800 to bring the bucket up over the worn stones which still remain to attest the fact. How happy Dickens was in the beauty of that scene! What delight he took in rebuilding the old place, with every legend of which he proved himself familiar, and repeopling it out of the storehouse of his fancy. "Here was the kitchen, and there the dining-hall! How frightfully dark they must have been in those days, with such

small slits for windows, and the fireplaces without chimneys! There were the galleries; this is one of the four towers; the others, you will understand, corresponded with this; and now, if you 're not dizzy, we will come out on the battlements for the view!" Up we went, of course, following our cheery leader until we stood among the topmost wall-flowers, which were waving yellow and sweet in the sunset air. East and west, north and south, our eyes traversed the beautiful garden land of Kent, the land beloved of poets through the centuries. Below lay the city of Rochester on one hand, and in the heart of it an old inn where a carrier was even then getting out, or putting in, horses and wagon for the night. A procession, with banners and music, was moving slowly by the tavern, and the quaint costumes in which the men were dressed suggested days long past, when far other scenes were going forward in this locality. It was almost like a pageant marching out of antiquity for our delectation. Our master of ceremonies revelled that day in repeopling the queer old streets down into which we were looking from our charming elevation. His delightful fancy seemed especially alert on that occasion, and we lived over again with him many a chapter in the history of Rochester, full of interest to those of us who had come from a land where all is new and comparatively barren of romance.

Below, on the other side, was the river Medway, from whose depths the castle once rose steeply. Now the *débris* and perhaps also a slight swerving of the river from its old course have left a rough margin, over which it would not be difficult to make an ascent. Rochester Bridge, too, is here, and the "windy hills" in the distance; and again, on the other hand, Chatham, and beyond, the Thames, with the sunset tingeing the many-colored sails. We were not easily persuaded to descend from our picturesque vantage-ground; but the master's hand led us gently on from point to point, until we found ourselves, before we were aware, on the grassy slope outside the castle wall. Besides, there was the cathedral to be visited, and the tomb of Richard Watts, "with the effigy of worthy Master Richard starting out of it like a ship's figure-head."

After seeing the cathedral, we went along the silent High Street, past queer Elizabethan houses with endless gables and fences and lattice-windows, until we came to Watts's Charity, the house of entertainment for six poor travellers. The establishment is so familiar to all lovers of Dickens through his description of it in the article entitled "Seven Poor Travellers" among his "Uncommercial" papers, that little is left to be said on that subject; except perhaps that no autobiographic sketch ever gave a more faithful picture, a closer portrait, than is there conveyed.

Dickens's fancy for Rochester, and his numberless associations with it, have left traces of that city in almost everything he wrote. From the time when Mr. Snodgrass first discovered the castle ruin from Rochester Bridge, to the last chapter of Edwin Drood, we observe hints of the city's quaintness or silence; the unending pavements, which go on and on till the wisest head would be puzzled to know where Rochester ends and where Chatham begins; the disposition of Father Time to have his own unimpeded way therein, and of the gray cathedral towers which loom up in the background of many a sketch and tale. Rochester, too, is on the way to Canterbury, Dickens's best loved cathedral, the home of Agnes Wickfield, the sunny spot in the life and memory of David Copperfield. David was particularly small, as we are told, when he first saw Canterbury, but he was already familiar with Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, and Robinson Crusoe, who came out, as he says, a glorious host, to keep him company. Naturally, the calm old place, the green nooks, the beauty of the cathedral, possessed a better chance with him than with many others, and surely no one could have loved them more. In the later years of his life the crowning-point of the summer holidays was "a pilgrimage to Canterbury."

The sun shone merrily through the day when he

chose to carry us thither. Early in the morning the whole house was astir; large hampers were packed, ladies and gentlemen were clad in gay mid-summer attire, and, soon after breakfast, huge carriages with four horses, and postilions with red coats and top-boots, after the fashion of the olden time, were drawn up before the door. Presently we were moving lightly over the road, the hop-vines dancing on the poles on either side, the orchards looking invitingly cool, the oast-houses fanning with their wide arms, the river glowing from time to time through the landscape. We made such a clatter passing through Rochester, that all the main street turned out to see the carriages, and, being obliged to stop the horses a moment, a shopkeeper, desirous of discovering Dickens among the party, hit upon the wrong man, and confused an humble individual among the company by calling a crowd, pointing him out as Dickens, and making him the mark of eager eyes. This incident seemed very odd to us in a place he knew so well. On we clattered, leaving the echoing street behind us, on and on for many a mile, until noon, when, finding a green wood and clear stream by the roadside, we encamped under the shadow of the trees in a retired spot for lunch. Again we went on, through quaint towns and lonely roads, until we came to Canterbury, in the yellow afternoon. The bells for service were ringing as we drove under the stone archway

into the soundless streets. The whole town seemed to be enjoying a simultaneous nap, from which it was aroused by our horses' hoofs. Out the people ran, at this signal, into the highway, and we were glad to descend at some distance from the centre of the city, thus leaving the excitement behind us. We had been exposed to the hot rays of the sun all day, and the change into the shadow of the cathedral was refreshing. Service was going forward as we entered; we sat down, therefore, and joined our voices with those of the choristers. Dickens, with tireless observation, noted how sleepy and inane were the faces of many of the singers, to whom this beautiful service was but a sickening monotony of repetition. The words, too, were gabbled over in a manner anything but impressive. He was such a downright enemy to form, as substituted for religion, that any dash of untruth or unreality was abhorrent to him. When the last sounds died away in the cathedral we came out again into the cloisters, and sauntered about until the shadows fell over the beautiful enclosure. We were hospitably entreated, and listened to many an historical tale of tomb and stone and grassy nook; but under all we were listening to the heart of our companion, who had so often wandered thither in his solitude, and was now re-reading the stories these urns had prepared for him.

During one of his winter visits, he says (in "Copperfield"):—

"Coming into Canterbury, I loitered through the old streets with a sober pleasure that calmed my spirits and eased my heart. There were the old signs, the old names over the shops, the old people serving in them. It appeared so long since I had been a school-boy there, that I wondered the place was so little changed, until I reflected how little I was changed myself. Strange to say, that quiet influence which was inseparable in my mind from Agnes seemed to pervade even the city where she dwelt. The venerable cathedral towers, and the old jackdaws and rooks, whose airy voices made them more retired than perfect silence would have done; the battered gateways, once stuck full with statues, long thrown down and crumbled away, like the reverential pilgrims who had gazed upon them; the still nooks, where the ivied growth of centuries crept over gabled ends and ruined walls; the ancient houses; the pastoral landscape of field, orchard, and garden; — everywhere, in everything, I felt the same serene air, the same calm, thoughtful, softening spirit."

Walking away and leaving Canterbury behind us forever, we came again into the voiceless streets, past a "very old house bulging out over the road, ... quite spotless in its cleanliness, the old-fashioned brass knocker on the low, arched door ornamented with carved garlands of fruit and flowers, twinkling like a star," the very house,

perhaps, "with angles and corners and carvings and mouldings," where David Copperfield was sent to school. We were turned off with a laughing reply, when we ventured to accuse this particular house of being *the one*, and were told there were several that "would do"; which was quite true, for nothing could be more quaint, more satisfactory to all, from the lovers of Chaucer to the lovers of Dickens, than this same city of Canterbury. The sun had set as we rattled noisily out of the ancient place that afternoon, and along the high road, which was quite novel in its evening aspect. There was no lingering now; on and on we went, the postilions flying up and down on the backs of their huge horses, their red coats glancing in the occasional gleams of wayside lamps, fire-flies making the orchard shine, the sunset lighting up vast clouds that lay across the western sky, and the whole scene filled with evening stillness. When we stopped to change horses, the quiet was almost oppressive. Soon after nine we espied the welcome lantern of Gad's Hill Place and the open gates. And so ended Dickens's last pilgrimage to Canterbury.

There was another interesting spot near Gad's Hill which was one of Dickens's haunts, and this was the "Druid-stone," as it is called, at Maidstone. This is within walking distance of his house, along the breezy hillside road, which we re-

member blossomy and wavy in the summer season, with open spaces in the hedges where one may look over wide hilly slopes, and at times come upon strange cuts down into the chalk which pervades this district. We turned into a lane from the dusty road, and, following our leader over a barred gate, came into wide grassy fields full of summer's bloom and glory. A short walk farther brought us to the Druid-stone, which Dickens thought to be, from the fitness of its position, simply a vantage-ground chosen by priests, — whether Druid or Christian of course it would be impossible to say, — from which to address a multitude. The rock served as a kind of background and sounding-board, while the beautiful sloping of the sward upward from the speaker made it an excellent position for out-of-door discourses. On this day it was only a blooming solitude, where the birds had done all the talking, until we arrived. It was a fine afternoon haunt, and one worthy of a visit, apart from the associations which make the place dear.

One of the weirdest neighborhoods to Gad's Hill, and one of those most closely associated with Dickens, is the village of Cooling. A cloudy day proved well enough for Cooling; indeed, was undoubtedly chosen by the adroit master of hospitalities as being a fitting sky to show the dark landscape of "Great Expectations." The pony-carriage went thither to accompany the walking party and carry the baskets;

the whole way, as we remember, leading on among narrow lanes, where heavy carriages were seldom seen. We are told in the novel, "On every rail and gate, wet lay clammy, and the marsh mist was so thick that the wooden finger on the post directing people to our village — a direction which they never accepted, for they never came there — was invisible to me until I was close under it." The lanes certainly wore that aspect of never being accepted as a way of travel; but this was a delightful recommendation to our walk, for summer kept her own way there, and grass and wild-flowers were abundant. It was already noon, and low clouds and mists were lying about the earth and sky as we approached a forlorn little village on the edge of the wide marshes described in the opening of the novel. This was Cooling, and passing by the few cottages, the decayed rectory, and straggling buildings, we came at length to the churchyard. It took but a short time to make us feel at home there, with the marshes on one hand, the low wall over which Pip saw the convict climb before he dared to run away; "the five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, ... sacred to the memory of five little brothers, ... to which I have been indebted for a belief that they all had been born on their backs, with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence"; — all these points, combined with the

general dreariness of the landscape, the far-stretching marshes, and the distant sea-line, soon revealed to us that this was Pip's country, and we might momently expect to see the convict's head, or to hear the clank of his chain, over that low wall.

We were in the churchyard now, having left the pony within eye-shot, and taken the baskets along with us, and were standing on one of those very lozenges, somewhat grass-grown by this time, and deciphering the inscriptions. On tiptoe we could get a wide view of the marsh, with the wind sweeping in a lonely limitless way through the tall grasses. Presently hearing Dickens's cheery call, we turned to see what he was doing. He had chosen a good flat gravestone in one corner (the corner farthest from the marsh and Pip's little brothers and the expected convict), had spread a wide napkin thereupon after the fashion of a domestic dinner-table, and was rapidly transferring the contents of the hampers to that point. The horrible whimsicality of trying to eat and make merry under these deplorable circumstances, the tragic-comic character of the scene, appeared to take him by surprise. He at once threw himself into it (as he says in "Copperfield" he was wont to do with anything to which he had laid his hand) with fantastic eagerness. Having spread the table after the most approved style, he suddenly disappeared behind the wall for a moment, transformed himself by

the aid of a towel and napkin into a first-class head-waiter, reappeared, laid a row of plates along the top of the wall, as at a bar-room or eating-house, again retreated to the other side with some provisions, and, making the gentlemen of the party stand up to the wall, went through the whole play with most entire gravity. When we had wound up with a good laugh, and were again seated together on the grass around the table, we espied two wretched figures, not the convicts this time, although we might have easily persuaded ourselves so, but only tramps gazing at us over the wall from the marsh side as they approached, and finally sitting down just outside the churchyard gate. They looked wretchedly hungry and miserable, and Dickens said at once, starting up, "Come, let us offer them a glass of wine and something good for lunch." He was about to carry them himself, when what he considered a happy thought seemed to strike him. "*You* shall carry it to them," he cried, turning to one of the ladies; "it will be less like a charity and more like a kindness if one of you should speak to the poor souls!" This was so much in character for him, who stopped always to choose the most delicate way of doing a kind deed, that the memory of this little incident remains, while much, alas! of his wit and wisdom have vanished beyond the power of reproducing. We feasted on the satisfaction the tramps took in their lunch,

long after our own was concluded; and, seeing them well off on their road again, took up our own way to Gad's Hill Place. How comfortable it looked on our return; how beautifully the afternoon gleams of sunshine shone upon the holly-trees by the porch; how we turned away from the door and went into the playground, where we bowled on the green turf, until the tall maid in her spotless cap was seen bringing the five-o'clock tea thitherward; how the dews and the setting sun warned us at last we must prepare for dinner; and how Dickens played longer and harder than any one of the company, scorning the idea of going in to tea at that hour, and beating his ball instead, quite the youngest of the company up to the last moment! — all this returns with vivid distinctness as I write these inadequate words.

Many days and weeks passed over after those June days were ended before we were to see Dickens again. Our meeting then was at the station in London, on our way to Gad's Hill once more. He was always early at a railway station, he said, if only to save himself the unnecessary and wasteful excitement hurry commonly produces; and so he came to meet us with a cheery manner, as if care were shut up in some desk or closet he had left behind, and he were ready to make the day a gay one, whatever the sun might say to it. A small roll of manuscript in his hand led him soon to confess that

a new story was already begun; but this communication was made in the utmost confidence, as if to account for any otherwise unexplainable absences, physically or mentally, from our society, which might occur. But there were no gaps during that autumn afternoon of return to Gad's Hill. He told us how summer had brought him no vacation this year, and only two days of recreation. One of those, he said, was spent with his family at "Rosherville Gardens," "the place," as a huge advertisement informed us, "to spend a happy day." His curiosity with regard to all entertainments for the people, he said to us, carried him thither, and he seemed to have been amused and rewarded by his visit. The previous Sunday had found him in London; he was anxious to reach Gad's Hill before the afternoon, but in order to accomplish this he must walk nine miles to a way station, which he did. Coming to the little village, he inquired where the station was, and, being shown in the wrong direction, walked calmly down a narrow road which did not lead there at all. "On I went," he said, "in the perfect sunshine, over yellow leaves, without even a wandering breeze to break the silence, when suddenly I came upon three or four antique wooden houses standing under trees on the borders of a lovely stream, and, a little farther, upon an ancient doorway to a grand hall, perhaps the home of some bishop of the olden

time. The road came to an end there, and I was obliged to retrace my steps; but anything more entirely peaceful and beautiful in its aspect on that autumnal day than this retreat, forgotten by the world, I almost never saw." He was eager, too, to describe for our entertainment one of the yearly cricket-matches among the villagers at Gad's Hill which had just come off. Some of the toasts at the supper afterward were as old as the time of Queen Anne. For instance, —

> "More pigs,
> Fewer parsons";

delivered with all seriousness; a later one was, "May the walls of old England never be covered with French polish!"

Once more we recall a morning at Gad's Hill, a soft white haze over everything, and the yellow sun burning through. The birds were singing, and beauty and calm pervaded the whole scene. We strayed through Cobham Park and saw the lovely vistas through the autumnal haze; once more we reclined in the cool châlet in the afternoon, and watched the vessels going and coming upon the ever-moving river. Suddenly all has vanished; and now, neither spring nor autumn, nor flowers nor birds, nor dawn nor sunset, nor the ever-moving river, can be the same to any of us again. We have all drifted down upon the river of Time,

and one has already sailed out into the illimitable ocean.

On a pleasant Sunday morning in October, 1869, as I sat looking out on the beautiful landscape from my chamber window at Gad's Hill, a servant tapped at my door and gave me a summons from Dickens, written in his drollest manner on a sheet of paper, bidding me descend into his study on business of great importance. That day I heard from the author's lips the first chapters of "Edwin Drood," the concluding lines of which initial pages were then scarcely dry from the pen. The story is unfinished, and he who read that autumn morning with such vigor of voice and dramatic power is in his grave. This private reading took place in the little room where the great novelist for many years had been accustomed to write, and in the house where on a pleasant evening in the following June he died. The spot is one of the loveliest in Kent, and must always be remembered as the last residence of Charles Dickens. He used to declare his firm belief that Shakespeare was specially fond of Kent, and that the poet chose Gad's Hill and Rochester for the scenery of his plays from intimate personal knowledge of their localities. He said he had no manner of doubt but that one of Shakespeare's haunts was the old inn at Rochester, and that this conviction came forcibly upon him one night as he

was walking that way, and discovered Charles's Wain over the chimney just as Shakespeare has described it, in words put into the mouth of the carrier in King Henry IV. There is no prettier place than Gad's Hill in all England for the earliest and latest flowers, and Dickens chose it, when he had arrived at the fulness of his fame and prosperity, as the home in which he most wished to spend the remainder of his days. When a boy, he would often pass the house with his father and frequently said to him, "If ever I have a dwelling of my own, Gad's Hill Place is the house I mean to buy." In that beautiful retreat he had for many years been accustomed to welcome his friends, and find relaxation from the crowded life of London. On the lawn playing at bowls, in the Swiss summer-house charmingly shaded by green leaves, he always seemed the best part of summer, beautiful as the season is in the delightful region where he lived.

There he could be most thoroughly enjoyed, for he never seemed so cheerfully at home anywhere else. At his own table, surrounded by his family, and a few guests, old acquaintances from town, — among them sometimes Forster, Carlyle, Reade, Collins, Layard, Maclise, Stone, Macready, Talfourd, — he was always the choicest and liveliest companion. He was not what is called in society a professed talker, but he was something far better and rarer.

In his own inimitable manner he would frequently relate to me, if prompted, stories of his youthful days, when he was toiling on the London Morning Chronicle, passing sleepless hours as a reporter on the road in a post-chaise, driving day and night from point to point to take down the speeches of Shiel or O'Connell. He liked to describe the post-boys, who were accustomed to hurry him over the road that he might reach London in advance of his rival reporters, while, by the aid of a lantern, he was writing out for the press, as he flew over the ground, the words he had taken down in short-hand. Those were his days of severe training, when in rain and sleet and cold he dashed along, scarcely able to keep the blinding mud out of his tired eyes; and he imputed much of his ability for steady hard work to his practice as a reporter, kept at his grinding business, and determined if possible to earn seven guineas a week. A large sheet was started at this period of his life, in which all the important speeches of Parliament were to be reported *verbatim* for future reference. Dickens was engaged on this gigantic journal. Mr. Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby) had spoken at great length on the condition of Ireland. It was a long and eloquent speech, occupying many hours in the delivery. Eight reporters were sent in to do the work. Each one was required to report three quarters of an hour, then to retire, write out his

portion, and to be succeeded by the next. Young Dickens was detailed to lead off with the first part. It also fell to his lot, when the time came round, to report the closing portions of the speech. On Saturday the whole was given to the press, and Dickens ran down to the country for a Sunday's rest. Sunday morning had scarcely dawned, when his father, who was a man of immense energy, made his appearance in his son's sleeping-room. Mr. Stanley was so dissatisfied with what he found in print, except the beginning and ending of his speech (just what Dickens had reported) that he sent immediately to the office and obtained the sheets of those parts of the report. He there found the name of the reporter, which, according to custom, was written on the margin. Then he requested that the young man bearing the name of Dickens should be immediately sent for. Dickens's father, all aglow with the prospect of probable promotion in the office, went immediately to his son's stopping-place in the country and brought him back to London. In telling the story, Dickens said: "I remember perfectly to this day the aspect of the room I was shown into, and the two persons in it, Mr. Stanley and his father. Both gentlemen were extremely courteous to me, but I noted their evident surprise at the appearance of so young a man. While we spoke together, I had taken a seat extended to me in the middle of the room. Mr.

Stanley told me he wished to go over the whole speech and have it written out by me, and if I were ready he would begin now. Where would I like to sit? I told him I was very well where I was, and we could begin immediately. He tried to induce me to sit at a desk, but at that time in the House of Commons there was nothing but one's knees to write upon, and I had formed the habit of doing my work in that way. Without further pause he began and went rapidly on, hour after hour, to the end, often becoming very much excited and frequently bringing down his hand with great violence upon the desk near which he stood."

I have before me, as I write, an unpublished autograph letter of young Dickens, which he sent off to his employer in November, 1835, while he was on a reporting expedition for the Morning Chronicle. At that early stage of his career he seems to have had that unfailing accuracy of statement so marked in after years when he became famous. The letter was given to me several years ago by one of Dickens's brother reporters. Thus it runs: —

George and Pelican, Newbury, Sunday Morning.

Dear Fraser: In conjunction with The Herald we have arranged for a Horse Express from Marlborough to London on Tuesday night, to go the whole distance at the rate of thirteen miles an hour, for six guineas: half has been paid, but, to insure despatch, the remainder is withheld until the boy arrives at the office, when he will produce a paper with a copy of the agreement on one side, and an order for three

guineas (signed by myself) on the other. Will you take care that it is duly honored? A Boy from The Herald will be in waiting at our office for their copy; and Lyons begs me to remind you most strongly that it is an indispensable part of our agreement *that he should not be detained one instant.*

We go to Bristol to-day, and if we are equally fortunate in laying the chaise-horses, I hope the packet will reach town by seven. As all the papers have arranged to leave Bristol the moment Russell is down, we have determined on adopting the same plan, — one of us will go to Marlborough in the chaise with one Herald man, and the other remain at Bristol with the second Herald man to conclude the account for the next day. The Times has ordered a chaise and four the whole distance, so there is every probability of our beating them hollow. From all we hear, we think the Herald, relying on the packet reaching town early, intends publishing the report in their first Edition. This is, however, of course, mere speculation on our parts, as we have no direct means of ascertaining their intention.

I think I have now given you all needful information. I have only in conclusion to impress upon you the necessity of having all the compositors ready, at a very early hour, for if Russell be down by half past eight, we hope to have his speech in town at six.

Believe me (for self and Beard) very truly yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

Nov., 1835.

THOMAS FRASER, ESQ., Morning Chronicle Office.

No writer ever lived whose method was more exact, whose industry was more constant, and whose punctuality was more marked, than those of Charles Dickens. Authorship never became a hackneyed pursuit with him, and he once told me that all his life long he never got over the thrill of pleasure and

interest which accompanied the first sight in type of anything he had written. After he had sent a manuscript to the printer he was as eager to see his words set up in the proof-sheet as any young adventurer into letters possibly could be. He never shirked labor, mental or bodily. He rarely declined, if the object were a good one, taking the chair at a public meeting, or accepting a charitable trust. Many widows and orphans of deceased literary men have for years been benefited by his wise trusteeship or counsel, and he spent a great portion of his time personally looking after the property of the poor whose interests were under his control. He was, as has been intimated, one of the most industrious of men, and marvellous stories are told (not by himself) of what he has accomplished in a given time in literary and social matters. His studies were all from nature and life, and his habits of observation were untiring. If he contemplated writing "Hard Times," he arranged with the master of Astley's circus to spend many hours behind the scenes with the riders and among the horses; and if the composition of the "Tale of Two Cities" were occupying his thoughts, he could banish himself to France for two years to prepare for that great work. Hogarth pencilled on his thumb-nail a striking face in a crowd that he wished to preserve; Dickens with his transcendent memory chronicled in his mind whatever of interest met his

eye or reached his ear, any time or anywhere. Speaking of memory one day, he said the memory of children was prodigious; it was a mistake to fancy children ever forgot anything. When he was delineating the character of Mrs. Pipchin, he had in his mind an old lodging-house keeper in an English watering-place where he was living with his father and mother when he was but two years old. After the book was written he sent it to his sister, who wrote back at once: "Good heavens! what does this mean? you have painted our lodging-house keeper, and you were but two years old at that time!" Characters and incidents crowded the chambers of his brain, all ready for use when occasion required. No subject of human interest was ever indifferent to him, and never a day went by that did not afford him some suggestion to be utilized in the future.

His favorite mode of exercise was walking; and when in America, scarcely a day passed, no matter what the weather, that he did not accomplish his eight or ten miles. It was on these expeditions that he liked to recount to the companion of his rambles stories and incidents of his early life; and when he was in the mood, his fun and humor knew no bounds. He would then frequently discuss the numerous characters in his delightful books, and would act out, on the road, dramatic situations, where Nickleby or Copperfield or Swiveller would

play distinguished parts. I remember he said, on one of these occasions, that during the composition of his first stories he could never entirely dismiss the characters about whom he happened to be writing; that while the "Old Curiosity Shop" was in process of composition Little Nell followed him about everywhere; that while he was writing "Oliver Twist" Fagin the Jew would never let him rest, even in his most retired moments; that at midnight and in the morning, on the sea and on the land, Tiny Tim and Little Bob Cratchit were ever tugging at his coat-sleeve, as if impatient for him to get back to his desk and continue the story of their lives. But he said after he had published several books, and saw what serious demands his characters were accustomed to make for the constant attention of his already overtasked brain, he resolved that the phantom individuals should no longer intrude on his hours of recreation and rest, but that when he closed the door of his study he would shut them all in, and only meet them again when he came back to resume his task. That force of will with which he was so pre-eminently endowed enabled him to ignore these manifold existences till he chose to renew their acquaintance. He said, also, that when the children of his brain had once been launched, free and clear of him, into the world, they would sometimes turn up in the most unexpected manner to look their father in the face.

Sometimes he would pull my arm while we were walking together and whisper, "Let us avoid Mr. Pumblechook, who is crossing the street to meet us"; or, "Mr. Micawber is coming; let us turn down this alley to get out of his way." He always seemed to enjoy the fun of his comic people, and had unceasing mirth over Mr. Pickwick's misadventures. In answer one day to a question, prompted by psychological curiosity, if he ever dreamed of any of his characters, his reply was, "Never; and I am convinced that no writer (judging from my own experience, which cannot be altogether singular, but must be a type of the experience of others) has ever dreamed of the creatures of his own imagination. It would," he went on to say, "be like a man's dreaming of meeting himself, which is clearly an impossibility. Things exterior to one's self must always be the basis of dreams." The growing up of characters in his mind never lost for him a sense of the marvellous. "What an unfathomable mystery there is in it all!" he said one day. Taking up a wineglass, he continued: "Suppose I choose to call this a *character*, fancy it a man, endue it with certain qualities; and soon the fine filmy webs of thought, almost impalpable, coming from every direction, we know not whence, spin and weave about it, until it assumes form and beauty, and becomes instinct with life."

In society Dickens rarely referred to the traits

and characteristics of people he had known; but during a long walk in the country he delighted to recall and describe the peculiarities, eccentric and otherwise, of dead and gone as well as living friends. Then Sydney Smith and Jeffrey and Christopher North and Talfourd and Hood and Rogers seemed to live over again in his vivid reproductions, made so impressive by his marvellous memory and imagination. As he walked rapidly along the road, he appeared to enjoy the keen zest of his companion in the numerous impersonations with which he was indulging him.

He always had much to say of animals as well as of men, and there were certain dogs and horses he had met and known intimately which it was specially interesting to him to remember and picture. There was a particular dog in Washington which he was never tired of delineating. The first night Dickens read in the Capital this dog attracted his attention. "He came into the hall by himself," said he, "got a good place before the reading began, and paid strict attention throughout. He came the second night, and was ignominiously shown out by one of the check-takers. On the third night he appeared again with another dog, which he had evidently promised to pass in free; but you see," continued Dickens, "upon the imposition being unmasked, the other dog apologized by a howl and withdrew. His intentions, no doubt,

were of the best, but he afterwards rose to explain outside, with such inconvenient eloquence to the reader and his audience, that they were obliged to put him down stairs."

He was such a firm believer in the mental faculties of animals, that it would have gone hard with a companion with whom he was talking, if a doubt were thrown, however inadvertently, on the mental intelligence of any four-footed friend that chanced to be at the time the subject of conversation. All animals which he took under his especial patronage seemed to have a marked affection for him. Quite a colony of dogs has always been a feature at Gad's Hill. Writing in 1868 to a young person in Boston, who was once the owner of his Newfoundland dog, Don, Dickens says: "The said dog has grown very big and fat, and is the father of a son exactly like him, who is named Bumble. Don and Bumble and four other very large dogs accompany their master in his country walks, and are the terror of all beholders. When Bumble was a very small dog indeed (though large enough to know better) he ate up his father's dinner, and also the dinners of the four other very large dogs, and immediately fainted away."

In many walks and talks with Dickens, his conversation, now, alas! so imperfectly recalled, frequently ran on the habits of birds, the raven, of course, interesting him particularly. He always

liked to have a raven hopping about his grounds, and whoever has read the new Preface to "Barnaby Rudge" must remember several of his old friends in that line. He had quite a fund of canary-bird anecdotes, and the pert ways of birds that picked up worms for a living afforded him infinite amusement. He would give a capital imitation of the way a robin-redbreast cocks his head on one side preliminary to a dash forward in the direction of a wriggling victim. There is a small grave at Gad's Hill to which Dickens would occasionally take a friend, and it was quite a privilege to stand with him beside the burial-place of little Dick, the family's favorite canary.

What a treat it was to go with him to the London Zoölogical Gardens, a place he greatly delighted in at all times! He knew the zoölogical address of every animal, bird, and fish of any distinction; and he could, without the slightest hesitation, on entering the grounds, proceed straightway to the celebrities of claw or foot or fin. The delight he took in the hippopotamus family was most exhilarating. He entered familiarly into conversation with the huge, unwieldy creatures, and they seemed to understand him. Indeed, he spoke to all the unphilological inhabitants with a directness and tact which went home to them at once. He chaffed with the monkeys, coaxed the tigers, and bamboozled the snakes, with a dexterity unapproachable. All the

keepers knew him, he was such a loyal visitor, and I noticed they came up to him in a friendly way, with the feeling that they had a sympathetic listener always in Charles Dickens.

There were certain books of which Dickens liked to talk during his walks. Among his especial favorites were the writings of Cobbett, DeQuincey, the Lectures on Moral Philosophy by Sydney Smith, and Carlyle's French Revolution. Of this latter Dickens said it was the book of all others which he read perpetually and of which he never tired, — the book which always appeared more imaginative in proportion to the fresh imagination he brought to it, a book for inexhaustibleness to be placed before every other book. When writing the "Tale of Two Cities," he asked Carlyle if he might see one of the works to which he referred in his history; whereupon Carlyle packed up and sent down to Gad's Hill *all* his reference volumes, and Dickens read them faithfully. But the more he read the more he was astonished to find how the facts had passed through the alembic of Carlyle's brain and had come out and fitted themselves, each as a part of one great whole, making a compact result, indestructible and unrivalled; and he always found himself turning away from the books of reference, and re-reading with increased wonder this marvellous new growth. There were certain books particularly hateful to him, and of which he never

spoke except in terms of most ludicrous raillery. Mr. Barlow, in "Sandford and Merton," he said was the favorite enemy of his boyhood and his first experience of a bore. He had an almost supernatural hatred for Barlow, "because he was so very *instructive*, and always hinting doubts with regard to the veracity of 'Sindbad the Sailor,' and had no belief whatever in 'The Wonderful Lamp' or 'The Enchanted Horse.'" Dickens rattling his mental cane over the head of Mr. Barlow was as much better than any play as can be well imagined. He gloried in many of Hood's poems, especially in that biting Ode to Rae Wilson, and he would gesticulate with a fine fervor the lines,

> ". . . . the hypocrites who ope Heaven's door
> Obsequious to the sinful man of riches, —
> But put the wicked, naked, bare-legged poor
> In parish *stocks* instead of *breeches*."

One of his favorite books was Pepys's Diary, the curious discovery of the key to which, and the odd characteristics of its writer, were a never-failing source of interest and amusement to him. The vision of Pepys hanging round the door of the theatre, hoping for an invitation to go in, not being able to keep away in spite of a promise he had made to himself that he would spend no more money foolishly, delighted him. Speaking one day of Gray, the author of the Elegy, he said: "No poet ever came walking down to posterity with so

small a book under his arm." He preferred Smollett to Fielding, putting "Peregrine Pickle" above "Tom Jones." Of the best novels by his contemporaries he always spoke with warm commendation, and "Griffith Gaunt" he thought a production of very high merit. He was "hospitable to the thought" of all writers who were really in earnest, but at the first exhibition of floundering or inexactness he became an unbeliever. People with dislocated understandings he had no tolerance for.

He was passionately fond of the theatre, loved the lights and music and flowers, and the happy faces of the audience; he was accustomed to say that his love of the theatre never failed, and, no matter how dull the play, he was always careful while he sat in the box to make no sound which could hurt the feelings of the actors, or show any lack of attention. His genuine enthusiasm for Mr. Fechter's acting was most interesting. He loved to describe seeing him first, quite by accident, in Paris, having strolled into a little theatre there one night. "He was making love to a woman," Dickens said, "and he so elevated her as well as himself by the sentiment in which he enveloped her, that they trod in a purer ether, and in another sphere, quite lifted out of the present. 'By heavens!' I said to myself, 'a man who can do this can do anything.' I never saw two people more

purely and instantly elevated by the power of love. The manner, also," he continued, "in which he presses the hem of the dress of Lucy in the Bride of Lammermoor is something wonderful. The man has genius in him which is unmistakable."

Life behind the scenes was always a fascinating study to Dickens. "One of the oddest sights a green-room can present," he said one day, "is when they are collecting children for a pantomime. For this purpose the prompter calls together all the women in the ballet, and begins giving out their names in order, while they press about him eager for the chance of increasing their poor pay by the extra pittance their children will receive. 'Mrs. Johnson, how many?' 'Two, sir.' 'What ages?' 'Seven and ten.' 'Mrs. B., how many?' and so on, until the required number is made up. The people who go upon the stage, however poor their pay or hard their lot, love it too well ever to adopt another vocation of their free-will. A mother will frequently be in the wardrobe, children in the pantomime, elder sisters in the ballet, etc."

Dickens's habits as a speaker differed from those of most orators. He gave no thought to the composition of the speech he was to make till the day before he was to deliver it. No matter whether the effort was to be a long or a short one, he never wrote down a word of what he was going to say;

but when the proper time arrived for him to consider his subject, he took a walk into the country and the thing was done. When he returned he was all ready for his task.

He liked to talk about the audiences that came to hear him read, and he gave the palm to his Parisian one, saying it was the quickest to catch his meaning. Although he said there were many always present in his room in Paris who did not fully understand English, yet the French eye is so quick to detect expression that it never failed instantly to understand what he meant by a look or an act. "Thus, for instance," he said, "when I was impersonating Steerforth in 'David Copperfield,' and gave that peculiar grip of the hand to Emily's lover, the French audience burst into cheers and rounds of applause." He said with reference to the preparation of his readings, that it was three months' hard labor to get up one of his own stories for public recitation, and he thought he had greatly improved his presentation of the "Christmas Carol" while in this country. He considered the storm scene in "David Copperfield" one of the most effective of his readings. The character of Jack Hopkins in "Bob Sawyer's Party" he took great delight in representing, and as Jack was a prime favorite of mine, he brought him forward whenever the occasion prompted. He always spoke of Hopkins as my particular friend, and he was constantly

quoting him, taking on the peculiar voice and turn of the head which he gave Jack in the public reading.

It gave him a natural pleasure when he heard quotations from his own books introduced without effort into conversation. He did not always remember, when his own words were quoted, that he was himself the author of them, and appeared astounded at the memory of others in this regard. He said Mr. Secretary Stanton had a most extraordinary knowledge of his books, and a power of taking the text up at any point, which he supposed to belong to only one person, and that person not himself.

It was said of Garrick that he was the *cheerfullest* man of his age. This can be as truly said of Charles Dickens. In his presence there was perpetual sunshine, and gloom was banished as having no sort of relationship with him. No man suffered more keenly or sympathized more fully than he did with want and misery; but his motto was, "Don't stand and cry; press forward and help remove the difficulty." The speed with which he was accustomed to make the deed follow his yet speedier sympathy was seen pleasantly on the day of his visit to the School-ship in Boston Harbor. He said, previously to going on board that ship, nothing would tempt him to make a speech, for he should always be obliged to do it on similar occa-

sions, if he broke through his rule so early in his reading tour. But Judge Russell had no sooner finished his simple talk, to which the boys listened, as they always do, with eager faces, than Dickens rose as if he could not help it, and with a few words so magnetized them that they wore their hearts in their eyes as if they meant to keep the words forever. An enthusiastic critic once said of John Ruskin, "that he could discover the Apocalypse in a daisy." As noble a discovery may be claimed for Dickens. He found all the fair humanities blooming in the lowliest hovel. He never *put on* the good Samaritan: that character was native to him. Once while in this country, on a bitter, freezing afternoon, — night coming down in a drifting snow-storm, — he was returning with me from a long walk in the country. The wind and baffling sleet were so furious that the street in which we happened to be fighting our way was quite deserted; it was almost impossible to see across it, the air was so thick with the tempest; all conversation between us had ceased, for it was only possible to breast the storm by devoting our whole energies to keeping on our feet; we seemed to be walking in a different atmosphere from any we had ever before encountered. All at once I missed Dickens from my side. What had become of him? Had he gone down in the drift, utterly exhausted, and was the snow burying him out of sight? Very soon the sound of his

cheery voice was heard on the other side of the way. With great difficulty, over the piled-up snow, I struggled across the street, and there found him lifting up, almost by main force, a blind old man who had got bewildered by the storm, and had fallen down unnoticed, quite unable to proceed. Dickens, a long distance away from him, with that tender, sensitive, and penetrating vision, ever on the alert for suffering in any form, had rushed at once to the rescue, comprehending at a glance the situation of the sightless man. To help him to his feet and aid him homeward in the most natural and simple way afforded Dickens such a pleasure as only the benevolent by intuition can understand.

Throughout his life Dickens was continually receiving tributes from those he had benefited, either by his books or by his friendship. There is an odd and very pretty story (vouched for here as true) connected with the influence he so widely exerted. In the winter of 1869, soon after he came up to London to reside for a few months, he received a letter from a man telling him that he had begun life in the most humble way possible, and that he considered he owed his subsequent great success and such education as he had given himself entirely to the encouragement and cheering influence he had derived from Dickens's books, of which he had been a constant reader from his childhood. He had been made a partner in his master's business, and when

the head of the house died, the other day, it was found he had left the whole of his large property to this man. As soon as he came into possession of this fortune, his mind turned to Dickens, whom he looked upon as his benefactor and teacher, and his first desire was to tender him some testimonial of gratitude and veneration. He then begged Dickens to accept a large sum of money. Dickens declined to receive the money, but his unknown friend sent him instead two silver table ornaments of great intrinsic value bearing this inscription: "To Charles Dickens, from one who has been cheered and stimulated by his writings, and held the author amongst his first Remembrances when he became prosperous." One of these silver ornaments was supported by three figures, representing three seasons. In the original design there were, of course, four, but the donor was so averse to associating the idea of Winter in any sense with Dickens that he caused the workman to alter the design and leave only the *cheerful* seasons. No event in the great author's career was ever more gratifying and pleasant to him.

His friendly notes were exquisitely turned, and are among his most charming compositions. They abound in felicities only like himself. In 1860 he wrote to me while I was sojourning in Italy: "I should like to have a walk through Rome with you this bright morning (for it really *is* bright in London), and convey you over some favorite ground of

mine. I used to go up the street of Tombs, past the tomb of Cecilia Metella, away out upon the wild campagna, and by the old Appian Road (easily tracked out among the ruins and primroses), to Albano. There, at a very dirty inn, I used to have a very dirty lunch, generally with the family's dirty linen lying in a corner, and inveigle some very dirty Vetturino in sheep-skin to take me back to Rome."

In a little note in answer to one I had written consulting him about the purchase of some old furniture in London he wrote: "There is a chair (without a bottom) at a shop near the office, which I think would suit you. It cannot stand of itself, but will almost seat somebody, if you put it in a corner, and prop one leg up with two wedges and cut another leg off. The proprietor asks £20, but says he admires literature and would take £18. He is of republican principles and I think would take £17 19*s.* 6*d.* from a cousin; shall I secure this prize? It is very ugly and wormy, and it is related, but without proof, that on one occasion Washington declined to sit down in it."

Here are the last two missives I ever received from his dear, kind hand:—

5 Hyde Park Place, London, W.,
Friday, January 14, 1870.

My dear Fields: We live here (opposite the Marble Arch) in a charming house until the 1st of June, and then

return to Gad's. The Conservatory is completed, and is a brilliant success; — but an expensive one!

I read this afternoon at three, — a beastly proceeding which I particularly hate, — and again this day week at three. These morning readings particularly disturb me at my book-work; nevertheless I hope, please God, to lose no way on their account. An evening reading once a week is nothing. By the by, I recommenced last Tuesday evening with the greatest brilliancy.

I should be quite ashamed of not having written to you and my dear Mrs. Fields before now, if I did n't know that you will both understand how occupied I am, and how naturally, when I put my papers away for the day, I get up and fly. I have a large room here, with three fine windows, overlooking the Park, — unsurpassable for airiness and cheerfulness.

You saw the announcement of the death of poor dear Harness. The circumstances are curious. He wrote to his old friend the Dean of Battle saying he would come to visit him on that day (the day of his death). The Dean wrote back: "Come next day, instead, as we are obliged to go out to dinner, and you will be alone." Harness told his sister a little impatiently that he *must* go on the first-named day, — that he had made up his mind to go, and MUST. He had been getting himself ready for dinner, and came to a part of the staircase whence two doors opened, — one, upon another level passage; one, upon a flight of stone steps. He opened the wrong door, fell down the steps, injured himself very severely, and died in a few hours.

You will know — *I* don't — what Fechter's success is in America at the time of this present writing. In his farewell performances at the Princess's he acted very finely. I thought the three first acts of his Hamlet very much better than I had ever thought them before, — and I always thought very highly of them. We gave him a foaming stirrup cup at Gad's Hill.

Forster (who has been ill with his bronchitis again) thinks

No. 2 of the new book (Edwin Drood) a clincher, — I mean that word (as his own expression) for *Clincher*. There is a curious interest steadily working up to No. 5, which requires a great deal of art and self-denial. I think also, apart from character and picturesqueness, that the young people are placed in a very novel situation. So I hope — at Nos. 5 and 6 the story will turn upon an interest suspended until the end.

I can't believe it, and don't, and won't, but they say Harry's twenty-first birthday is next Sunday. I have entered him at the Temple just now; and if he don't get a fellowship at Trinity Hall when his time comes, I shall be disappointed, if in the present disappointed state of existence.

I hope you may have met with the little touch of Radicalism I gave them at Birmingham in the words of Buckle? With pride I observe that it makes the regular political traders, of all sorts, perfectly mad. Sich was my intentions, as a grateful acknowledgment of having been misrepresented.

I think Mrs. ——'s prose very admirable, but I don't believe it! No, I do *not*. My conviction is that those Islanders get frightfully bored by the Islands, and wish they had never set eyes upon them!

Charley Collins has done a charming cover for the monthly part of the new book. At the very earnest representations of Millais (and after having seen a great number of his drawings) I am going to engage with a new man; retaining, of course, C. C.'s cover aforesaid. K—— has made some more capital portraits, and is always improving.

My dear Mrs. Fields, if "He" (made proud by chairs and bloated by pictures) does not give you my dear love, let us conspire against him when you find him out, and exclude him from all future confidences. Until then

Ever affectionately yours and his,

C. D.

5 Hyde Park Place, London, W.,
Monday, April 18, 1870.

My dear Fields: I have been hard at work all day until post time, and have only leisure to acknowledge the receipt, the day before yesterday, of your note containing such good news of Fechter; and to assure you of my undiminished regard and affection.

We have been doing wonders with No. 1 of Edwin Drood. *It has very, very far outstripped every one of its predecessors.*

Ever your affectionate friend,

Charles Dickens.

Bright colors were a constant delight to him; and the gay hues of flowers were those most welcome to his eye. When the rhododendrons were in bloom in Cobham Park, the seat of his friend and neighbor, Lord Darnley, he always counted on taking his guests there to enjoy the magnificent show. He delighted to turn out for the delectation of his Transatlantic cousins a couple of postilions in the old red jackets of the old red royal Dover road, making the ride as much as possible like a holiday drive in England fifty years ago.

When in the mood for humorous characterization, Dickens's hilarity was most amazing. To hear him tell a ghost-story with a very florid imitation of a very pallid ghost, or hear him sing an old-time stage song, such as he used to enjoy in his youth at a cheap London theatre, to see him imitate a lion in a menagerie-cage, or the clown in a pantomime when he flops and folds himself up like a jack-knife, or to join with him in some mirthful

game of his own composing, was to become acquainted with one of the most delightful and original companions in the world.

On one occasion, during a walk with me, he chose to run into the wildest of vagaries about *conversation*. The ludicrous vein he indulged in during that two hours' stretch can never be forgotten. Among other things, he said he had often thought how restricted one's conversation must become when one was visiting a man who was to be hanged in half an hour. He went on in a most surprising manner to imagine all sorts of difficulties in the way of becoming interesting to the poor fellow. "Suppose," said he, "it should be a rainy morning while you are making the call, you could not possibly indulge in the remark, 'We shall have fine weather to-morrow, sir,' for what would that be to him? For my part, I think," said he, "I should confine my observations to the days of Julius Cæsar or King Alfred."

At another time when speaking of what was constantly said about him in certain newspapers, he observed: "I notice that about once in every seven years I become the victim of a paragraph disease. It breaks out in England, travels to India by the overland route, gets to America per Cunard line, strikes the base of the Rocky Mountains, and, rebounding back to Europe, mostly perishes on the steppes of Russia from inanition and extreme cold."

When he felt he was not under observation, and that tomfoolery would not be frowned upon or gazed at with astonishment, he gave himself up without reserve to healthy amusement and strengthening mirth. It was his mission to make people happy. Words of good cheer were native to his lips, and he was always doing what he could to lighten the lot of all who came into his beautiful presence. His talk was simple, natural, and direct, never dropping into circumlocution nor elocution. Now that he is gone, whoever has known him intimately for any considerable period of time will linger over his tender regard for, and his engaging manner with, children; his cheery "Good day" to poor people he happened to be passing in the road; his trustful and earnest "Please God," when he was promising himself any special pleasure, like rejoining an old friend or returning again to scenes he loved. At such times his voice had an irresistible pathos in it, and his smile diffused a sensation like music. When he came into the presence of squalid or degraded persons, such as one sometimes encounters in almshouses or prisons, he had such soothing words to scatter here and there, that those who had been "most hurt by the archers" listened gladly, and loved him without knowing who it was that found it in his heart to speak so kindly to them.

Oftentimes during long walks in the streets and

by-ways of London, or through the pleasant Kentish lanes, or among the localities he has rendered forever famous in his books, I have recalled the sweet words in which Shakespeare has embalmed one of the characters in Love's Labor's Lost: —

> "A merrier man,
> Within the limit of becoming mirth,
> I never spent an hour's talk withal:
> His eye begets occasion for his wit;
> For every object that the one doth catch
> The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
> Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
> Delivers in such apt and gracious words
> That aged ears play truant at his tales,
> And younger hearings are quite ravishéd;
> So sweet and voluble is his discourse."

Twenty years ago Daniel Webster said that Dickens had already done more to ameliorate the condition of the English poor than all the statesmen Great Britain had sent into Parliament. During the unceasing demands upon his time and thought, he found opportunities of visiting personally those haunts of suffering in London which needed the keen eye and sympathetic heart to bring them before the public for relief. Whoever has accompanied him, as I have, on his midnight walks into the cheap lodging-houses provided for London's lowest poor, cannot have failed to learn lessons never to be forgotten. Newgate and Smithfield were lifted out of their abominations by his eloquent

pen, and many a hospital is to-day all the better charity for having been visited and watched by Charles Dickens. To use his own words, through his whole life he did what he could "to lighten the lot of those rejected ones whom the world has too long forgotten and too often misused."

These inadequate, and, of necessity, hastily written, records must stand for what they are worth as personal recollections of the great author who has made so many millions happy by his inestimable genius and sympathy. His life will no doubt be written out in full by some competent hand in England; but however numerous the volumes of his biography, the half can hardly be told of the good deeds he has accomplished for his fellow-men.

And who could ever tell, if those volumes were written, of the subtile qualities of insight and sympathy which rendered him capable of friendship above most men, — which enabled him to reinstate its ideal, and made his presence a perpetual joy, and separation from him an ineffaceable sorrow?

BARRY CORNWALL

AND

SOME OF HIS FRIENDS.

BARRY CORNWALL.

To the Wife of Bryan Waller Procter, and the Mother of Adelaide Anne Procter, these Recollections are cordially inscribed.

"Old Acquaintance, shall the nights
You and I once talked together,
Be forgot like common things?"

"His thoughts half hid in golden dreams,
Which make thrice fair the songs and streams
Of Air and Earth."

"Song should breathe of scents and flowers;
Song should like a river flow;
Song should bring back scenes and hours
That we loved,—ah, long ago!"

BARRY CORNWALL.

"BARRY CORNWALL"

AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS.

I FIRST saw the poet five-and-twenty years ago, in his own house in London, at No. 13 Upper Harley Street, Cavendish Square. He was then declining into the vale of years, but his mind was still vigorous and young. My letter of introduction to him was written by Charles Sumner, and it proved sufficient for the beginning of a friendship which existed through a quarter of a century. My last interview with him occurred in 1869. I found him then quite feeble, but full of his old kindness and geniality. His speech was somewhat difficult to follow, for he had been slightly paralyzed not long before; but after listening to him for half an hour it was easy to understand nearly every word he uttered. He spoke with warm feeling of Longfellow, who had been in London during that season, and had called to see his venerable friend before proceeding to the Continent.

"Was n't it good of him," said the old man, in his tremulous voice, "to think of *me* before he had been in town twenty-four hours?" He also spoke of his dear companion, John Kenyon, at whose house we had often met in years past, and he called to mind a breakfast party there, saying, with deep feeling, "And you and I are the only ones now alive of all who came together that happy morning!"

A few months ago,* at the great age of eighty-seven, Bryan Waller Procter, familiarly and honorably known in English literature for sixty years past as "Barry Cornwall," calmly "fell on sleep." The schoolmate of Lord Byron and Sir Robert Peel at Harrow, the friend and companion of Keats, Lamb, Shelley, Coleridge, Landor, Hunt, Talfourd, and Rogers, the man to whom Thackeray "affectionately dedicated" his "Vanity Fair," one of the kindest souls that ever gladdened earth, has now joined the great majority of England's hallowed sons of song. No poet ever left behind him more fragrant memories, and he will always be thought of as one whom his contemporaries loved and honored. No harsh word will ever be spoken by those who have known him of the author of "Marcian Colonna," "Mirandola," "The Broken Heart," and those charming lyrics which rank the

* October, 1874.

poet among the first of his class. His songs will be sung so long as music wedded to beautiful poetry is a requisition anywhere. His verses have gone into the Book of Fame, and such pieces as "Touch us gently, Time," "Send down thy winged Angel, God," "King Death," "The Sea," and "Belshazzar is King," will long keep his memory green. Who that ever came habitually into his presence can forget the tones of his voice, the tenderness in his gray retrospective eyes, or the touch of his sympathetic hand laid on the shoulder of a friend! The elements were indeed so kindly mixed in him that no bitterness or rancor or jealousy had part or lot in his composition. No distinguished person was ever more ready to help forward the rising and as yet nameless literary man or woman who asked his counsel and warm-hearted suffrage. His mere presence was sunshine to a new-comer into the world of letters and criticism, for he was always quick to encourage, and slow to disparage anybody. Indeed, to be *human* only entitled any one who came near him to receive the gracious bounty of his goodness and courtesy. He made it the happiness of his life never to miss, whenever opportunity occurred, the chance of conferring pleasure and gladness on those who needed kind words and substantial aid.

His equals in literature venerated and loved him. Dickens and Thackeray never ceased to regard him

with the deepest feeling, and such men as Browning and Tennyson and Carlyle and Forster rallied about him to the last. He was the delight of all those interesting men and women who habitually gathered around Rogers's famous table in the olden time, for his manner had in it all the courtesy of genius, without any of that chance asperity so common in some literary circles. The shyness of a scholar brooded continually over him and made him reticent, but he was never silent from ill-humor. His was that true modesty so excellent in ability, and so rare in celebrities petted for a long time in society. His was also that happy alchemy of mind which transmutes disagreeable things into golden and ruby colors like the dawn. His temperament was the exact reverse of Fuseli's, who complained that "*nature* put him out." A beautiful spirit has indeed passed away, and the name of "Barry Cornwall," beloved in both hemispheres, is now sanctified afresh by the seal of eternity so recently stamped upon it.

It was indeed a privilege for a young American, on his first travels abroad, to have "Barry Cornwall" for his host in London. As I recall the memorable days and nights of that long-ago period, I wonder at the good fortune which brought me into such relations with him, and I linger with profound gratitude over his many acts of unmerited

kindness. One of the most intimate rambles I ever took with him was in 1851, when we started one morning from a book-shop in Piccadilly, where we met accidentally. I had been in London only a couple of days, and had not yet called upon him for lack of time. Several years had elapsed since we had met, but he began to talk as if we had parted only a few hours before. At first I thought his mind was impaired by age, and that he had forgotten how long it was since we had spoken together. I imagined it possible that he mistook me for some one else; but very soon I found that his memory was not at fault, for in a few minutes he began to question me about old friends in America, and to ask for information concerning the probable sea-sick horrors of an Atlantic voyage. "I suppose," said he, "knowing your infirmity, you found it hard work to stand on your immaterial legs, as Hood used to call Lamb's quivering limbs." Sauntering out into the street, he went on in a quaintly humorous way to imagine what a rough voyage must be to a real sufferer, and thus walking gayly along, we came into Leadenhall Street. There he pointed out the office where his old friend and fellow-magazinist, "Elia," spent so many years of hard work from ten until four o'clock of every day. Being in a mood for reminiscence, he described the Wednesday evenings he used to spend with "Charles and Mary" and their friends around the old "mahogany-

tree" in Russell Street. I remember he tried to give me an idea of how Lamb looked and dressed, and how he stood bending forward to welcome his guests as they arrived in his humble lodgings. Procter thought nothing unimportant that might serve in any way to illustrate character, and so he seemed to wish that I might get an exact idea of the charming person both of us prized so ardently and he had known so intimately. Speaking of Lamb's habits, he said he had never known his friend to drink immoderately except upon one occasion, and he observed that "Elia," like Dickens, was a small and delicate eater. With faltering voice he told me of Lamb's "givings away" to needy, impoverished friends whose necessities were yet greater than his own. His secret charities were constant and unfailing, and no one ever suffered hunger when he was by. He could not endure to see a fellow-creature in want if he had the means to feed him. Thinking, from a depression of spirits which Procter in his young manhood was once laboring under, that perhaps he was in want of money, Lamb looked him earnestly in the face as they were walking one day in the country together, and blurted out, in his stammering way, "My dear boy, I have a hundred-pound note in my desk that I really don't know what to do with: oblige me by taking it and getting the confounded thing out of my keeping." "I was in no need of money,"

COLERIDGE.

said Procter, "and I declined the gift; but it was hard work to make Lamb believe that I was not in an impecunious condition."

Speaking of Lamb's sister Mary, Procter quoted Hazlitt's saying that "Mary Lamb was the most rational and wisest woman he had ever been acquainted with." As we went along some of the more retired streets in the old city, we had also, I remember, much gossip about Coleridge and his manner of reciting his poetry, especially when "Elia" happened to be among the listeners, for the philosopher put a high estimate upon Lamb's critical judgment. The author of "The Ancient Mariner" always had an excuse for any bad habit to which he was himself addicted, and he told Procter one day that perhaps snuff was the final cause of the human nose. In connection with Coleridge we had much reminiscence of such interesting persons as the Novellos, Martin Burney, Talfourd, and Crabb Robinson, and a store of anecdotes in which Haydon, Manning, Dyer, and Godwin figured at full length. In course of conversation I asked my companion if he thought Lamb had ever been really in love, and he told me interesting things of Hester Savory, a young Quaker girl of Pentonville, who inspired the poem embalming the name of Hester forever, and of Fanny Kelly, the actress with "the divine plain face," who will always live in one of "Elia's" most exquisite essays. "He had a *rev-*

erence for the sex," said Procter, "and there were tender spots in his heart that time could never entirely cover up or conceal."

During our walk we stepped into Christ's Hospital, and turned to the page on its record book where together we read this entry: "October 9, 1782, Charles Lamb, aged seven years, son of John Lamb, scrivener, and Elizabeth his wife."

It was a lucky morning when I dropped in to bid "good morrow" to the poet as I was passing his house one day, for it was then he took from among his treasures and gave to me an autograph letter addressed to himself by Charles Lamb in 1829. I found the dear old man alone and in his library, sitting at his books, with the windows wide open, letting in the spring odors. Quoting, as I entered, some lines from Wordsworth embalming May mornings, he began to talk of the older poets who had worshipped nature with the ardor of lovers, and his eyes lighted up with pleasure when I happened to remember some almost forgotten stanza from England's "Helicon." It was an easy transition from the old bards to "Elia," and he soon went on in his fine enthusiastic way to relate several anecdotes of his eccentric friend. As I rose to take leave he said, —

"Have I ever given you one of Lamb's letters to carry home to America?"

KEATS.

"No," I replied, "and you must not part with the least scrap of a note in 'Elia's' handwriting. Such things are too precious to be risked on a sea-voyage to another hemisphere."

"America ought to share with England in these things," he rejoined; and leading me up to a sort of cabinet in the library, he unlocked a drawer and got out a package of time-stained papers. "Ah," said he, as he turned over the golden leaves, "here is something you will like to handle." I unfolded the sheet, and lo! it was in Keats's handwriting, the sonnet on first looking into Chapman's Homer. "Keats gave it to me," said Procter, "many, many years ago," and then he proceeded to read, in tones tremulous with delight, these undying lines: —

"Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many Western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

I sat gazing at the man who had looked on Keats in the flush of his young genius, and wondered at

my good fortune. As the living poet folded up again the faded manuscript of the illustrious dead one, and laid it reverently in its place, I felt grateful for the honor thus vouchsafed to a wandering stranger in a foreign land, and wished that other and worthier votaries of English letters might have been present to share with me the boon of such an interview. Presently my hospitable friend, still rummaging among the past, drew out a letter, which was the one, he said, he had been looking after. "Cram it into your pocket," he cried, "for I hear —— coming down stairs, and perhaps she won't let you carry it off!" The letter is addressed to B. W. Procter, Esq., 10 Lincoln's Inn, New Square. I give the entire epistle here just as it stands in the original which Procter handed me that memorable May morning. He told me that the law question raised in this epistle was a sheer fabrication of Lamb's, gotten up by him to puzzle his young correspondent, the conveyancer. The coolness referred to between himself and Robinson and Talfourd, Procter said, was also a fiction invented by Lamb to carry out his legal mystification.

Jan'y 19, 1829.

"My dear Procter, — I am ashamed to have not taken the drift of your pleasant letter, which I find to have been pure invention. But jokes are not suspected in Bœotian Enfield. We are plain people, and our talk is of corn, and cattle, and Waltham markets. Besides I was a little out of sorts when I received it. The fact is, I am involved in a

case which has fretted me to death, and I have no reliance except on you to extricate me. I am sure you will give me your best legal advice, having no professional friend besides but Robinson and Talfourd, with neither of whom at present I am on the best terms. My brother's widow left a will, made during the lifetime of my brother, in which I am named sole Executor, by which she bequeaths forty acres of arable property, which it seems she held under Covert Baron, unknown to my Brother, to the heirs of the body of Elizabeth Dowden, her married daughter by a first husband, in fee simple, recoverable by fine — invested property, mind, for there is the difficulty — subject to leet and quit rent — in short, worded in the most guarded terms, to shut out the property from Isaac Dowden the husband. Intelligence has just come of the death of this person in India, where he made a will, entailing this property (which seem'd entangled enough already) to the heirs of his body, that should not be born of his wife; for it seems by the Law in India natural children can recover. They have put the cause into Exchequer Process here, removed by Certiorari from the Native Courts, and the question is whether I should as Executor, try the cause here, or again re-remove to the Supreme Sessions at Bangalore, which I understand I can, or plead a hearing before the Privy Council here. As it involves all the little property of Elizabeth Dowden, I am anxious to take the fittest steps, and what may be the least expensive. For God's sake assist me, for the case is so embarrassed that it deprives me of sleep and appetite. M. Burney thinks there is a Case like it in Chapt. 170 Sect. 5 in Fearn's *Contingent Remainders.* Pray read it over with him dispassionately, and let me have the result. The complexity lies in the questionable power of the husband to alienate in usum enfeoffments whereof he was only collaterally seized, etc."

[On the leaf at this place there are some words in another hand. — F.]

"The above is some of M. Burney's memoranda, which he has left here, and you may cut out and give him. I had another favour to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings. A few lines of verse for a young friend's Album (six will be enough). M. Burney will tell you who she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold. Six lines — make 'em eight — signed Barry C——. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be 'headstrong, lovers of their own wills, having Albums.' I fled hither to escape the Albumean persecution, and had not been in my new house 24 hours, when the Daughter of the next house came in with a friend's Album to beg a contribution, and the following day intimated she had one of her own. Two more have sprung up since. If I take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, there will Albums be. New Holland has Albums. But the age is to be complied with. M. B. will tell you the sort of girl I request the 10 lines for. Somewhat of a pensive cast what you admire. The lines may come before the Law question, as that can not be determined before Hilary Term, and I wish your deliberate judgment on that. The other may be flimsy and superficial. And if you have not burnt your returned letter pray re-send it me as a monumental token of my stupidity. 'T was a little unthinking of you to touch upon a sore subject. Why, by dabbling in those accursed Annuals I have become a byword of infamy all over the kingdom. I have sicken'd decent women for asking me to write in Albums. There be 'dark jests' abroad, Master Cornwall, and some riddles may live to be clear'd up. And 't is n't every saddle is put on the right steed. And forgeries and false Gospels are not peculiar to the age following the Apostles. And some tubs don't stand on their right bottom. Which is all I wish to say in these ticklish Times — and so your servant,

"Chs. Lamb."

LAMB.

At the age of seventy-seven Procter was invited to print his recollections of Charles Lamb, and his volume was welcomed in both hemispheres as a pleasant addition to "Eliana." During the last eighteen years of Lamb's life Procter knew him most intimately, and his chronicles of visits to the little gamboge-colored house in Enfield are charming pencillings of memory. When Lamb and his sister, tired of housekeeping, went into lodging and boarding with T—— W——, their sometime next-door neighbor — who, Lamb said, had one joke and forty pounds a year, upon which he retired in a green old age — Procter still kept up his friendly visits to his old associate. And after the brother and sister moved to their last earthly retreat in Edmonton, where Charles died in 1834, Procter still paid them regular visits of love and kindness. And after Charles's death, when Mary went to live at a house in St. John's Wood, her unfailing friend kept up his cheering calls there till she set out "for that unknown and silent shore," on the 20th of May, in 1847.

Procter's conversation was full of endless delight to his friends. His "asides" were sometimes full of exquisite touches. I remember one evening when Carlyle was present and rattling on against American institutions, half comic and half serious, Procter, who sat near me, kept up a constant undertone of commentary, taking exactly the other

side. Carlyle was full of horse-play over the character of George Washington, whom he never vouchsafed to call anything but George. He said our first President was a good surveyor, and knew how to measure timber, and that was about all. Procter kept whispering to me all the while Carlyle was discoursing, and going over Washington's fine traits to the disparagement of everything Carlyle was laying down as gospel. I was listening to both these distinguished men at the same time, and it was one of the most curious experiences in conversation I ever happened to enjoy.

I was once present when a loud-voiced person of quality, ignorant and supercilious, was inveighing against the want of taste commonly exhibited by artists when they chose their wives, saying they almost always selected inferior women. Procter, sitting next to me, put his hand on my shoulder, and, with a look expressive of ludicrous pity and contempt for the idiotic speaker, whispered, "And yet Vandyck married the daughter of Earl Gower, poor fellow!" The mock solemnity of Procter's manner was irresistible. It had a wink in it that really embodied the genius of fun and sarcasm.

Talking of the ocean with him one day, he revealed this curious fact: although he is the author of one of the most stirring and popular sea-songs in the language, —

"The sea, the sea, the open sea!" —

BROWNING.

he said he had rarely been upon the tossing element, having a great fear of being made ill by it. I think he told me he had never dared to cross the Channel even, and so had never seen Paris. He said, like many others, he delighted to gaze upon the waters from a safe place on land, but had a horror of living on it even for a few hours. I recalled to his recollection his own lines, —

"I 'm on the sea! I 'm on the sea!
I am where I would ever be," —

and he shook his head, and laughingly declared I must have misquoted his words, or that Dibdin had written the piece and put "Barry Cornwall's" signature to it. We had, I remember, a great deal of fun over the poetical lies, as he called them, which bards in all ages had perpetrated in their verse, and he told me some stories of English poets, over which we made merry as we sat together in pleasant Cavendish Square that summer evening.

His world-renowned song of "The Sea" he afterward gave me in his own handwriting, and it is still among my autographic treasures.

It was Procter who first in my hearing, twenty-five years ago, put such an estimate on the poetry of Robert Browning that I could not delay any longer to make acquaintance with his writings. I remember to have been startled at hearing the man who in his day had known so many poets declare that Browning was the peer of any one who had

written in this century, and that, on the whole, his genius had not been excelled in his (Procter's) time. "Mind what I say," insisted Procter; "Browning will make an enduring name, and add another supremely great poet to England."

Procter could sometimes be prompted into describing that brilliant set of men and women who were in the habit of congregating at Lady Blessington's, and I well recollect his description of young N. P. Willis as he first appeared in her *salon*. "The young traveller came among us," said Procter, "enthusiastic, handsome, and good-natured, and took his place beside D'Orsay, Bulwer, Disraeli, and the other dandies as naturally as if he had been for years a London man about town. He was full of fresh talk concerning his own country, and we all admired his cleverness in compassing so aptly all the little newnesses of the situation. He was ready on all occasions, a little too ready, some of the *habitués* of the *salon* thought, and they could not understand his cool and quite-at-home manners. He became a favorite at first trial, and laid himself out determined to please and be pleased. His ever kind and thoughtful attention to others won him troops of friends, and I never can forget his unwearied goodness to a sick child of mine, with whom, night after night, he would sit by the bedside and watch, thus relieving the worn-out family in a way that was very tender and self-sacrificing."

WILLIS.

Of Lady Blessington's tact, kindness, and remarkable beauty Procter always spoke with ardor, and abated nothing from the popular idea of that fascinating person. He thought she had done more in her time to institute good feeling and social intercourse among men of letters than any other lady in England, and he gave her eminent credit for bringing forward the rising talent of the metropolis without waiting to be prompted by a public verdict. As the poet described her to me as she moved through her exquisite apartments, surrounded by all the luxuries that naturally connect themselves with one of her commanding position in literature and art, her radiant and exceptional beauty of person, her frank and cordial manners, the wit, wisdom, and grace of her speech, I thought of the fair Giovanna of Naples as painted in "Bianca Visconti": —

> "Gods! what a light enveloped her!
> . . . . Her beauty
> Was of that order that the universe
> Seemed governed by her motion. . . . .
> The pomp, the music, the bright sun in heaven,
> Seemed glorious by her leave."

One of the most agreeable men in London literary society during Procter's time was the companionable and ever kind-hearted John Kenyon. He was a man compacted of all the best qualities of an incomparable good-nature. His friends used to call him "the apostle of cheerfulness." He

could not endure a long face under his roof, and declined to see the dark side of anything. He wrote verses almost like a poet, but no one surpassed him in genuine admiration for whatever was excellent in others. No happiness was so great to him as the conferring of happiness on others, and I am glad to write myself his eternal debtor for much of my enjoyment in England, for he introduced me to many lifelong friendships, and he inaugurated for me much of that felicity which springs from intercourse with men and women whose books are the solace of our lifelong existence. How often have I seen Kenyon and Procter chirping together over an old quarto that had floated down from an early century, or rejoicing together over a well-worn letter in a family portfolio of treasures! They were a pair of veteran brothers, and there was never a flaw in their long and loving intercourse.

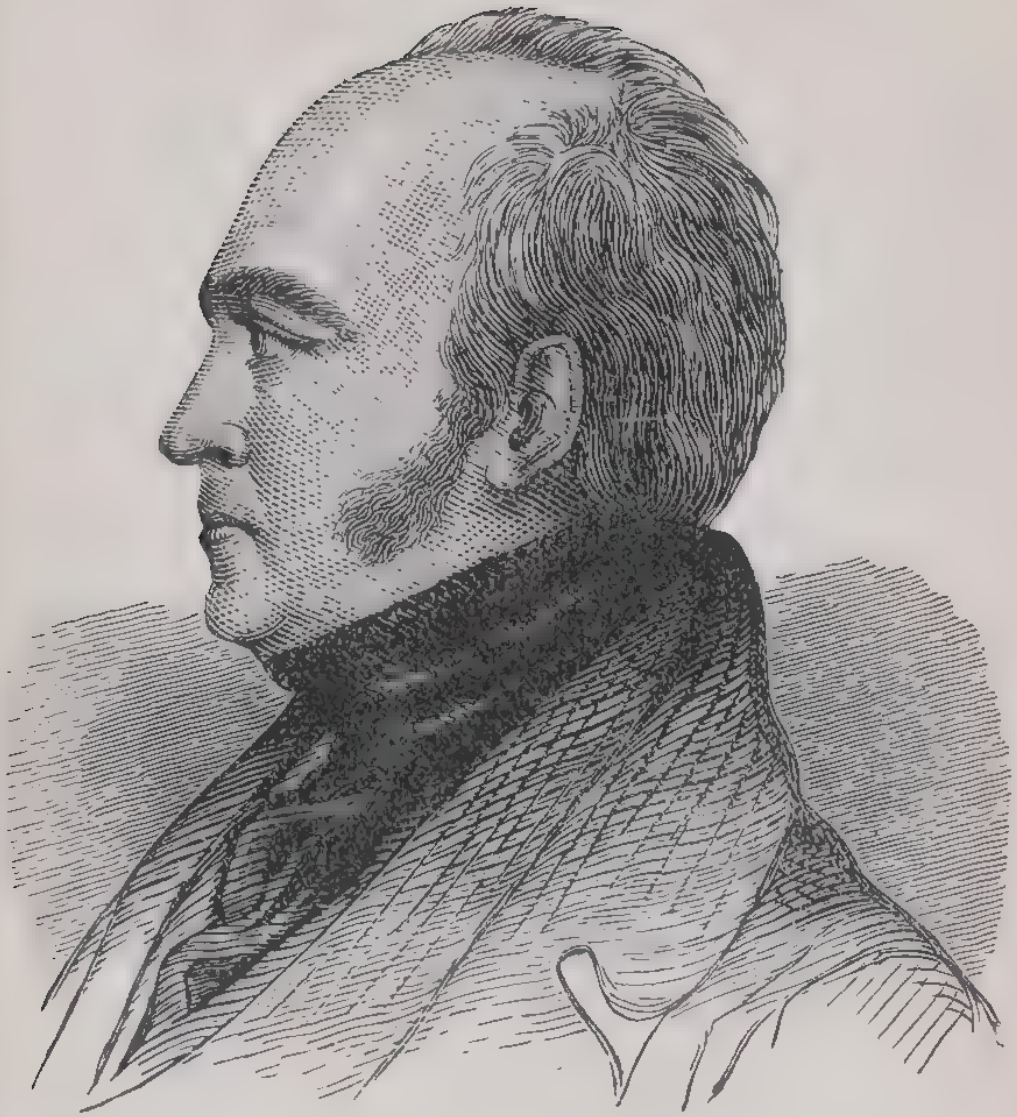
In a letter which Procter wrote to me in March, 1857, he thus refers to his old friend, then lately dead: "Everybody seems to be dying hereabouts, — one of my colleagues, one of my relations, one of my servants, three of them in one week, the last one in my own house. And now I seem fit for little else myself. My dear old friend Kenyon is dead. There never was a man, take him for all in all, with more amiable, attractive qualities. A kind friend, a good master, a generous and judicious dispenser of his wealth, honorable, sweet-tempered,

and serene, and genial as a summer's day. It is true that he has left me a solid mark of his friendship. I did not expect anything; but if to like a man sincerely deserved such a mark of his regard, I deserved it. I doubt if he has left one person who really liked him more than I did. Yes, one — I think one — a woman. . . . . I get old and weak and stupid. That pleasant journey to Niagara, that dip into your Indian summer, all such thoughts are over. I shall never see Italy; I shall never see Paris. My future is before me, — a very limited landscape, with scarcely one old friend left in it. I see a smallish room, with a bow-window looking south, a bookcase full of books, three or four drawings, and a library chair and table (once the property of my old friend Kenyon — I am writing on the table now), and you have the greater part of the vision before you. Is this the end of all things? I believe it is pretty much like most scenes in the fifth act, when the green (or black) curtain is about to drop and tell you that the play of *Hamlet* or of John Smith is over. But wait a little. There will be another piece, in which John Smith the younger will figure, and quite eclipse his old, stupid, wrinkled, useless, time-slaughtered parent. The king is dead, — long live the king!"

Kenyon was very fond of Americans, Professor Ticknor and Mr. George S. Hillard being especially dear to him. I remember hearing him say one day

that the "best prepared" young foreigner he had ever met, who had come to see Europe, was Mr. Hillard. One day at his dinner-table, in the presence of Mrs. Jameson, Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, Walter Savage Landor, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning, and the Procters, I heard him declare that one of the best talkers on any subject that might be started at the social board was the author of "Six Months in Italy."

It was at a breakfast in Kenyon's house that I first met Walter Savage Landor, whose writings are full of verbal legacies to posterity. As I entered the room with Procter, Landor was in the midst of an eloquent harangue on the high art of portraiture. Procter had been lately sitting to a daguerreotypist for a picture, and Mrs. Jameson, who was very fond of the poet, had arranged the camera for that occasion. Landor was holding the picture in his hand, declaring that it had never been surpassed as a specimen of that particular art. The grand-looking author of "Pericles and Aspasia" was standing in the middle of the room when we entered, and his voice sounded like an explosion of first-class artillery. Seeing Procter enter, he immediately began to address him compliments in high-sounding Latin. Poor modest Procter pretended to stop his ears that he might not listen to Landor's eulogistic phrases. Kenyon came to the rescue by declaring the breakfast had been waiting half an hour. When we ar-



LANDOR.

rived at the table Landor asked Procter to join him on an expedition into Spain which he was then contemplating. "No," said Procter, "for I cannot even 'walk Spanish,' and having never crossed the Channel, I do not intend to begin now."

"Never crossed the Channel!" roared Landor, — "never saw Napoleon Bonaparte!" He then began to tell us how the young Corsican looked when he first saw him, saying that he had the olive complexion and roundness of face of a Greek girl; that the consul's voice was deep and melodious, but untruthful in tone. While we were eating breakfast he went on to describe his Italian travels in early youth, telling us that he once saw Shelley and Byron meet in the doorway of a hotel in Pisa. Landor had lived in Italy many years, for he detested the climate of his native country, and used to say "one could only live comfortably in England who was rich enough to have a solar system of his own."

The Prince of Carpi said of Erasmus he was so thin-skinned that a fly would draw blood from him. The author of the "Imaginary Conversations" had the same infirmity. A very little thing would disturb him for hours, and his friends were never sure of his equanimity. I was present once when a blundering friend trod unwittingly on his favorite prejudice, and Landor went off instanter like a blaspheming torpedo. There were three things in the world which received no quarter at his hands, and

when in the slightest degree he scented *hypocrisy*, *pharisaism*, or *tyranny*, straightway he became furious, and laid about him like a mad giant.

Procter told me that when Landor got into a passion, his rage was sometimes uncontrollable. The fiery spirit knew his weakness, but his anger quite overmastered him in spite of himself. "Keep your temper, Landor," somebody said to him one day when he was raging. "That is just what I don't wish to keep," he cried; "I wish to be rid of such an infamous, ungovernable thing. I don't wish to *keep* my temper." Whoever wishes to get a good look at Landor will not seek for it alone in John Forster's interesting life of the old man, admirable as it is, but will turn to Dickens's "Bleak House" for side glances at the great author. In that vivid story Dickens has made his friend Landor sit for the portrait of Lawrence Boythorn. The very laugh that made the whole house vibrate, the roundness and fulness of voice, the fury of superlatives, are all given in Dickens's best manner, and no one who has ever seen Landor for half an hour could possibly mistake Boythorn for anybody else. Talking the matter over once with Dickens, he said, "Landor always took that presentation of himself in hearty good-humor, and seemed rather proud of the picture." This is Dickens's portrait: "He was not only a very handsome old gentleman, upright and stalwart, with a massive gray head, a fine composure

of face when silent, a figure that might have become corpulent but for his being so continually in earnest that he gave it no rest, and a chin that might have subsided into a double chin but for the vehement emphasis in which it was constantly required to assist; but he was such a true gentleman in his manner, so chivalrously polite, his face was lighted by a smile of so much sweetness and tenderness, and it seemed so plain that he had nothing to hide, that really I could not help looking at him with equal pleasure, whether he smilingly conversed with Ada and me, or was led by Mr. Jarndyce into some great volley of superlatives, or threw up his head like a blood-hound, and gave out that tremendous Ha! ha! ha!"

Landor's energetic gravity, when he was proposing some colossal impossibility, the observant novelist would naturally seize on, for Dickens was always on the lookout for exaggerations in human language and conduct. It was at Procter's table I heard Dickens describe a scene which transpired after the publication of the "Old Curiosity Shop." It seems that the first idea of Little Nell occurred to Dickens when he was on a birthday visit to Landor, then living in Bath. The old man was residing in lodgings in St. James Square, in that city, and ever after connected Little Nell with that particular spot. No character in prose fiction was a greater favorite with Landor, and one day, years after the

story was published, he burst out with a tremendous emphasis, and declared the one mistake of his life was that he had not purchased the house in Bath, and then and there burned it to the ground, so that no meaner association should ever desecrate the birthplace of Little Nell!

It was Procter's old schoolmaster (Dr. Drury, head-master of Harrow) who was the means of introducing Edmund Kean, the great actor, on the London stage. Procter delighted to recall the many theatrical triumphs of the eccentric tragedian, and the memoir which he printed of Kean will always be read with interest. I heard the poet one evening describe the player most graphically as he appeared in Sir Giles Overreach in 1816 at Drury Lane, when he produced such an effect on Lord Byron, who sat that night in a stage-box with Tom Moore. His lordship was so overcome by Kean's magnificent acting that he fell forward in a convulsive fit, and it was some time before he regained his wonted composure. Douglas Jerrold said that Kean's appearance in Shakespeare's Jew was like a chapter out of Genesis, and all who have seen the incomparable actor speak of his tiger-like power and infinite grace as unrivalled.

At Procter's house the best of England's celebrated men and women assembled, and it was a kind of enchantment to converse with the ladies one met there. It was indeed a privilege to be received by

MISS PROCTER.

the hostess herself, for Mrs. Procter was not only sure to be the most brilliant person among her guests, but she practised habitually that exquisite courtesy toward all which renders even a stranger, unwonted to London drawing-rooms, free from awkwardness and that constraint which are almost inseparable from a first appearance.

Among the persons I have seen at that house of urbanity in London I distinctly recall old Mrs. Montague, the mother of Mrs. Procter. She had met Robert Burns in Edinburgh when he first came up to that city to bring out his volume of poems. "I have seen many a handsome man in my time," said the old lady one day to us at dinner, "but never such a pair of eyes as young Robbie Burns kept flashing from under his beautiful brow." Mrs. Montague was much interested in Charles Sumner, and predicted for him all the eminence of his after-position. With a certain other American visitor she had no patience, and spoke of him to me as a "note of interrogation, too curious to be comfortable."

I distinctly recall Adelaide Procter as I first saw her on one of my early visits to her father's house. She was a shy, bright girl, and the poet drew my attention to her as she sat reading in a corner of the library. Looking at the young maiden, intent on her book, I remembered that exquisite sonnet in her father's volume, bearing date November, 1825,

addressed to the infant just a month after her birth: —

"Child of my heart! My sweet, beloved First-born!
Thou dove who tidings bring'st of calmer hours!
Thou rainbow who dost shine when all the showers
Are past or passing! Rose which hath no thorn,
No spot, no blemish, — pure and unforlorn,
Untouched, untainted! O my Flower of flowers!
More welcome than to bees are summer bowers,
To stranded seamen life-assuring morn!
Welcome, a thousand welcomes! Care, who clings
Round all, seems loosening now its serpent fold.
New hope springs upward; and the bright world seems
Cast back into a youth of endless springs!
Sweet mother, is it so? or grow I old,
Bewildered in divine Elysian dreams?"

I whispered in the poet's ear my admiration of the sonnet and the beautiful subject of it as we sat looking at her absorbed in the volume on her knees. Procter, in response, murmured some words expressive of his joy at having such a gift from God to gladden his affectionate heart, and he told me afterward what a comfort Adelaide had always been to his household. He described to me a visit Wordsworth made to his house one day, and how gentle the old man's aspect was when he looked at the children. "He took the hand of my dear Adelaide in his," said Procter, "and spoke some words to her, the recollection of which helped, perhaps, with other things, to incline her to poetry." When a little child "the golden-tressed Adelaide," as the

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poet calls her in one of his songs, must often have heard her father read aloud his own poëms as they came fresh from the fount of song, and the impression no doubt wrought upon her young imagination a spell she could not resist. On a sensitive mind like hers such a piece as the "Petition to Time" could not fail of producing its full effect, and no girl of her temperament would be unmoved by the music of words like these: —

"Touch us gently, Time!
Let us glide adown thy stream
Gently, as we sometimes glide
Through a quiet dream.
Humble voyagers are we,
Husband, wife, and children three.
(One is lost, an angel, fled
To the azure overhead.)

"Touch us gently, Time!
We 've not proud nor soaring wings:
Our ambition, *our* content,
Lie in simple things.
Humble voyagers are we,
O'er Life's dim unsounded sea,
Seeking only some calm clime:
Touch us *gently*, gentle Time!"

Adelaide Procter's name will always be sweet in the annals of English poetry. Her place was assured from the time when she made her modest advent, in 1853, in the columns of Dickens's "Household Words," and everything she wrote from that period onward until she died gave evi-

dence of striking and peculiar talent. I have heard Dickens describe how she first began to proffer contributions to his columns over a feigned name, that of Miss Mary Berwick; how he came to think that his unknown correspondent must be a governess; how, as time went on, he learned to value his new contributor for her self-reliance and punctuality, — qualities upon which Dickens always placed a high value; how at last, going to dine one day with his old friends the Procters, he launched enthusiastically out in praise of Mary Berwick (the writer herself, Adelaide Procter, sitting at the table); and how the delighted mother, being in the secret, revealed, with tears of joy, the real name of the young aspirant. Although Dickens has told the whole story most feelingly in an introduction to Miss Procter's "Legends and Lyrics," issued after her death, to hear it from his own lips and sympathetic heart, as I have done, was, as may be imagined, something better even than reading his pathetic words on the printed page.

One of the most interesting ladies in London literary society in the period of which I am writing was Mrs. Jameson, the dear and honored friend of Procter and his family. During many years of her later life she stood in the relation of consoler to her sex in England. Women in mental anguish needing consolation and counsel fled to her as to a convent for protection and guidance. Her published writ-

MRS. JAMESON.

ings established such a claim upon her sympathy in the hearts of her readers that much of her time for twenty years before she died was spent in helping others, by correspondence and personal contact, to submit to the sorrows God had cast upon them. She believed, with Milton, that it is miserable enough to be blind, but still more miserable not to be able to bear blindness. Her own earlier life had been darkened by griefs, and she knew from a deep experience what it was to enter the cloud and stand waiting and hoping in the shadows. In her instructive and delightful society I spent many an hour twenty years ago in the houses of Procter and Rogers and Kenyon. Procter, knowing my admiration of the Kemble family, frequently led the conversation up to that regal line which included so many men and women of genius. Mrs. Jameson was never weary of being questioned as to the legitimate supremacy of Mrs. Siddons and her nieces, Fanny and Adelaide Kemble. While Rogers talked of Garrick, and Procter of Kean, she had no enthusiasms that were not bounded in by those fine spirits whom she had watched and worshipped from her earliest years.

Now and then in the garden of life we get that special bite out of the sunny side of a peach. One of my own memorable experiences in that way came in this wise. I had heard, long before I went abroad, so much of the singing of the youngest

child of the "Olympian dynasty," Adelaide Kemble, so much of a brief career crowded with triumphs on the lyric stage, that I longed, if it might be possible, to listen to "the true daughter of her race." The rest of her family for years had been, as it were, "nourished on Shakespeare," and achieved greatness in that high walk of genius; but now came one who could interpret Mozart, Bellini, and Mercadante, one who could equal what Pasta and Malibran and Persiani and Grisi had taught the world to understand and worship. "Ah!" said a friend, "if you could only hear *her* sing 'Casta Diva!'" "Yes," said another, "and 'Auld Robin Gray!'" No wonder, I thought, at the universal enthusiasm for a vocal and lyrical artist who can alternate with equal power from "Casta Diva" to "Auld Robin Gray." I *must* hear her! She had left the stage, after a brief glory upon it, but as Madame Sartoris she sometimes sang at home to her guests.

"We are invited to hear some music this evening," said Procter to me one day, "and you must go with us." I went, and our hostess was the once magnificent *prima donna!* At intervals throughout the evening, with a voice

> "That crowds and hurries and precipitates
> With thick fast warble its delicious notes,"

she poured out her full soul in melody. We all know her now as the author of that exquisite

"Week in a French Country-House," and her fascinating book somehow always mingles itself in my memory with the enchanted evening when I heard her sing. As she sat at the piano in all her majestic beauty, I imagined her a sort of later St. Cecilia, and could have wished for another Raphael to paint her worthily. Henry Chorley, who was present on that memorable evening, seemed to be in a kind of nervous rapture at hearing again the supreme and willing singer. Procter moved away into a dim corner of the room, and held his tremulous hand over his eyes. The old poet's sensitive spirit seemed at times to be going out on the breath of the glorious artist who was thrilling us all with her power. Mrs. Jameson bent forward to watch every motion of her idol, looking applause at every noble passage. Another lady, whom I did not know, was tremulous with excitement, and I could well imagine what might have taken place when the "impassioned chantress" sang and enacted Semiramide as I have heard it described. Every one present was inspired by her fine mien, as well as by her transcendent voice. Mozart, Rossini, Bellini, Cherubini, — how she flung herself that night, with all her gifts, into their highest compositions! As she rose and was walking away from the piano, after singing an air from the "Medea" with a pathos that no musically uneducated pen like mine can or ought to attempt a

description of, some one intercepted her and whispered a request. Again she turned, and walked toward the instrument like a queen among her admiring court. A flash of lightning, followed by a peal of thunder that jarred the house, stopped her for a moment on her way to the piano. A sudden summer tempest was gathering, and crash after crash made it impossible for her to begin. As she stood waiting for the "elemental fury" to subside, her attitude was quite worthy of the niece of Mrs. Siddons. When the thunder had grown less frequent, she threw back her beautiful classic head and touched the keys. The air she had been called upon to sing was so wild and weird, a dead silence fell upon the room, and an influence as of terror pervaded the whole assembly. It was a song by Dessauer, which he had composed for her voice, the words by Tennyson. No one who was present that evening can forget how she broke the silence with

"We were two daughters of one race,"

or how she uttered the words,

"The wind is roaring in turret and tree."

It was like a scene in a great tragedy, and then I fully understood the worship she had won as belonging only to those consummate artists who have arisen to dignify and ennoble the lyric stage. As we left the house Procter said, "You are in great

luck to-night. I never heard her sing more divinely."

The Poet frequently spoke to me of the old days when he was contributing to the "London Magazine," which fifty years ago was deservedly so popular in Great Britain. All the "best talent" (to use a modern advertisement phrase) wrote for it. Carlyle sent his papers on Schiller to be printed in it; De Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" appeared in its pages; and the essays of "Elia" came out first in that potent periodical; Landor, Keats, and John Bowring contributed to it; and to have printed a prose or poetical article in the "London" entitled a man to be asked to dine out anywhere in society in those days. In 1821 the proprietors began to give dinners in Waterloo Place once a month to their contributors, who, after the cloth was removed, were expected to talk over the prospects of the magazine, and lay out the contents for next month. Procter described to me the authors of his generation as they sat round the old "mahogany-tree" of that period. "Very social and expansive hours they passed in that pleasant room half a century ago. Thither came stalwart Allan Cunningham, with his Scotch face shining with good-nature; Charles Lamb, 'a Diogenes with the heart of a St. John'; Hamilton Reynolds, whose good temper and vivacity were like condiments at a feast; John

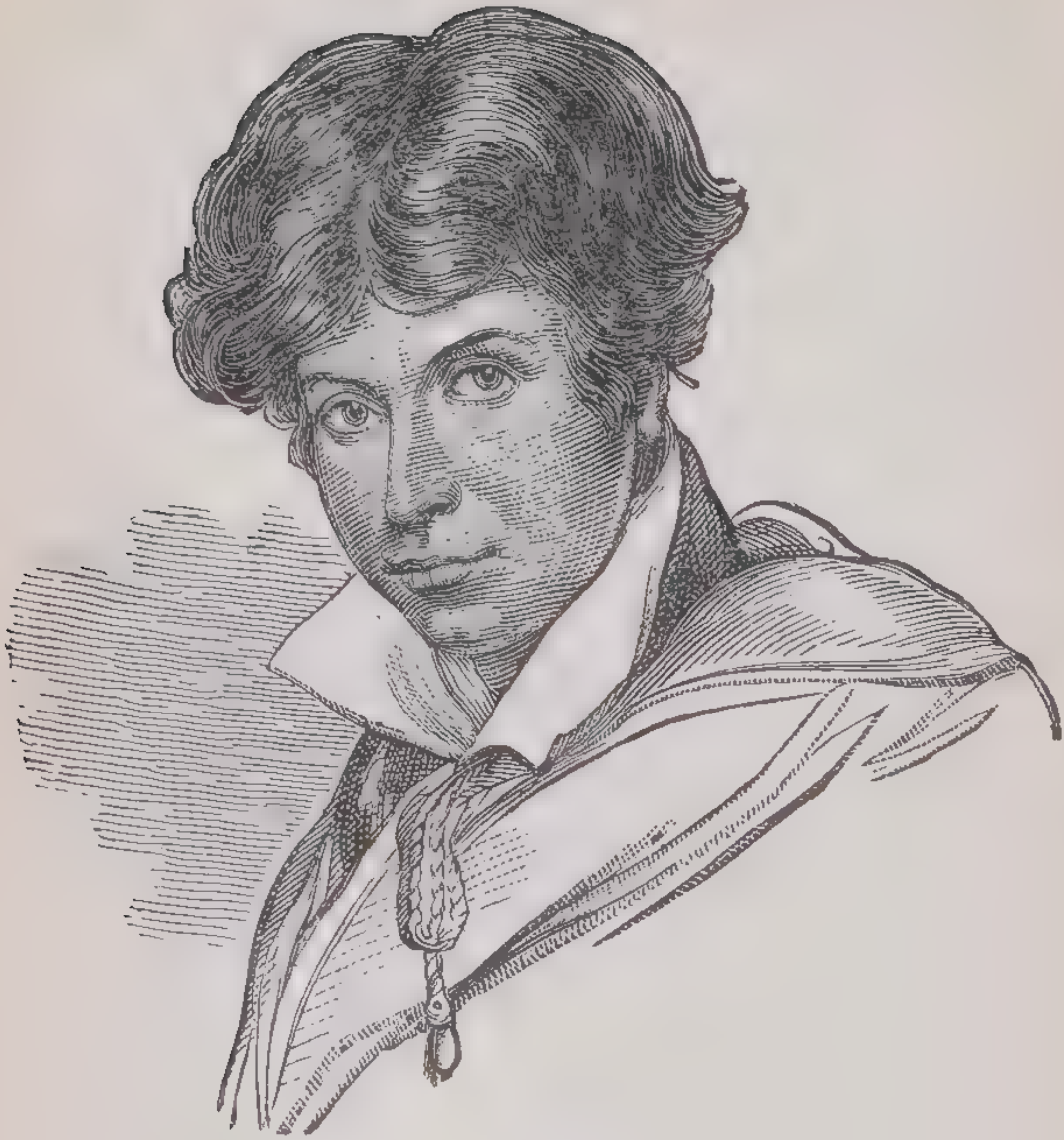
Clare, the peasant-poet, simple as a daisy; Tom Hood, young, silent, and grave, but who nevertheless now and then shot out a pun that damaged the shaking sides of the whole company; De Quincey, self-involved and courteous, rolling out his periods with a pomp and splendor suited, perhaps, to a high Roman festival; and with these sons of fame gathered certain nameless folk whose contributions to the great 'London' are now under the protection of that tremendous power which men call *Oblivion.*"

It was a vivid pleasure to hear Procter describe Edward Irving, the eccentric preacher, who made such a deep impression on the spirit of his time. He is now dislimned into space, but he was, according to all his thoughtful contemporaries, a "son of thunder," a "giant force of activity." Procter fully indorsed all that Carlyle has so nobly written of the eloquent man who, dying at forty-two, has stamped his strong personal vitality on the age in which he lived.

Procter, in his younger days, was evidently much impressed by that clever rascal who, under the name of "Janus Weathercock," scintillated at intervals in the old "London Magazine." Wainwright — for that was his real name — was so brilliant, he made friends for a time among many of the first-class contributors to that once famous periodical; but the Ten Commandments ruined all his

prospects for life. A murderer, a forger, a thief, — in short, a sinner in general, — he came to grief rather early in his wicked career, and suffered penalties of the law accordingly, but never to the full extent of his remarkable deserts. I have heard Procter describe his personal appearance as he came sparkling into the room, clad in undress military costume. His smart conversation deceived those about him into the belief that he had been an officer in the dragoons, that he had spent a large fortune, and now condescended to take a part in periodical literature with the culture of a gentleman and the grace of an amateur. How this vapid charlatan in a braided surtout and prismatic neck-tie could so long veil his real character from, and retain the regard of, such men as Procter and Talfourd and Coleridge is amazing. Lamb calls him the "kind and light-hearted Janus," and thought he liked him. The contributors often spoke of his guileless nature at the festal monthly board of the magazine, and no one dreamed that this gay and mock-smiling London cavalier was about to begin a career so foul and monstrous that the annals of crime for centuries have no blacker pages inscribed on them. To secure the means of luxurious living without labor, and to pamper his dandy tastes, this lounging, lazy *littérateur* resolved to become a murderer on a large scale, and accompany his cruel poisonings with forgeries whenever they were most

convenient. His custom for years was to effect policies of insurance on the lives of his relations, and then at the proper time administer strychnine to his victims. The heart sickens at the recital of his brutal crimes. On the life of a beautiful young girl named Abercrombie this fiendish wretch effected an insurance at various offices for £18,000 before he sent her to her account with the rest of his poisoned too-confiding relatives. So many heavily insured ladies dying in violent convulsions drew attention to the gentleman who always called to collect the money. But why this consummate criminal was not brought to justice and hung, my Lord Abinger never satisfactorily divulged. At last this polished Sybarite, who boasted that he always drank the richest Montepulciano, who could not sit long in a room that was not garlanded with flowers, who said he felt lonely in an apartment without a fine cast of the Venus de' Medici in it,—this self-indulgent voluptuary at last committed several forgeries on the Bank of England, and the Old Bailey sessions of July, 1837, sentenced him to transportation for life. While he was lying in Newgate prior to his departure, with other convicts, to New South Wales, where he died, Dickens went with a former acquaintance of the prisoner to see him. They found him still possessed with a morbid self-esteem and a poor and empty vanity. All other feelings and interests were overwhelmed



NUNT.

by an excessive idolatry of self, and he claimed (I now quote his own words to Dickens) a soul whose nutriment is love, and its offspring art, music, divine song, and still holier philosophy. To the last this super-refined creature seemed undisturbed by remorse. What place can we fancy for such a reptile, and what do we learn from such a career? Talfourd has so wisely summed up the whole case for us that I leave the dark tragedy with the recital of this solemn sentence from a paper on the culprit in the "Final Memorials of Charles Lamb": "Wainwright's vanity, nurtured by selfishness and unchecked by religion, became a disease, amounting perhaps to monomania, and yielding one lesson to repay the world for his existence, viz. that there is no state of the soul so dangerous as that in which the vices of the sensualist are envenomed by the grovelling intellect of the scorner."

One of the men best worth meeting in London, under any circumstances, was Leigh Hunt, but it was a special boon to find him and Procter together. I remember a day in the summer of 1859 when Procter had a party of friends at dinner to meet Hawthorne, who was then on a brief visit to London. Among the guests were the Countess of ——, Kinglake, the author of "Eothen," Charles Sumner, then on his way to Paris, and Leigh Hunt, the mercurial qualities of whose blood were even then perceptible in his manner.

Adelaide Procter did not reach home in season to begin the dinner with us, but she came later in the evening, and sat for some time in earnest talk with Hawthorne. It was a "goodly companie," long to be remembered. Hunt and Procter were in a mood for gossip over the ruddy port. As the twilight deepened around the table, which was exquisitely decorated with flowers, the author of "Rimini" recalled to Procter's recollection other memorable tables where they used to meet in vanished days with Lamb, Coleridge, and others of their set long since passed away. As they talked on in rather low tones, I saw the two old poets take hands more than once at the mention of dead and beloved names. I recollect they had a good deal of fine talk over the great singers whose voices had delighted them in bygone days; speaking with rapture of Pasta, whose tones in opera they thought incomparably the grandest musical utterances they had ever heard. Procter's tribute in verse to this

"Queen and wonder of the enchanted world of sound"

is one of his best lyrics, and never was singer more divinely complimented by poet. At the dinner I am describing he declared that she walked on the stage like an empress, "And when she sang," said he, "I held my breath." Leigh Hunt, in one of his letters to Procter in 1831, says: "As to Pasta, I love her, for she makes the ground firm under my feet, and the sky blue over my head."

I cannot remember all the good things I heard that day, but some of them live in my recollection still. Hunt quoted Hartley Coleridge, who said, "No boy ever imagined himself a poet while he was reading Shakespeare or Milton." And speaking of Landor's oaths, he said, "They are so rich, they are really nutritious." Talking of criticism, he said he did not believe in spiteful imps, but in kindly elves who would "nod to him and do him courtesies." He laughed at Bishop Berkely's attempt to destroy the world in one octavo volume. His doctrine to mankind always was, "Enlarge your tastes, that you may enlarge your hearts." He believed in reversing original propensities by education, — as Spallanzani brought up eagles on bread and milk, and fed doves on raw meat. "Don't let us demand too much of human nature," was a line in his creed; and he believed in Hood's advice, that gentleness in a case of wrong direction is always better than vituperation.

> "Mid light, and by degrees, should be the plan
> To cure the dark and erring mind;
> But who would rush at a benighted man
> And give him two black eyes for being blind?"

I recollect there was much converse that day on the love of reading in old age, and Leigh Hunt observed that Sir Robert Walpole, seeing Mr. Fox busy in the library at Houghton, said to him: "And you can read! Ah, how I envy you! I to-

tally neglected the *habit* of reading when I was young, and now in my old age I cannot read a single page." Hunt himself was a man who could be "penetrated by a book." It was inspiring to hear him dilate over "Plutarch's Morals," and quote passages from that delightful essay on "The Tranquillity of the Soul." He had such reverence for the wisdom folded up on his library shelves, he declared that the very perusal of the *backs of his books* was "a discipline of humanity." Whenever and wherever I met this charming person, I learned a lesson of gentleness and patience; for, steeped to the lips in poverty as he was, he was ever the most cheerful, the most genial companion and friend. He never left his good-nature outside the family circle, as a Mussulman leaves his slippers outside a mosque, but he always brought a smiling face into the house with him. T—— A——, whose fine floating wit has never yet quite condensed itself into a star, said one day of a Boston man that he was "east-wind made flesh." Leigh Hunt was exactly the opposite of this; he was compact of all the spicy breezes that blow. In his bare cottage at Hammersmith the temperament of his fine spirit heaped up such riches of fancy that kings, if wise ones, might envy his magic power.

"Onward in faith, and leave the rest to Heaven,"

was a line he often quoted. There was about him such a modest fortitude in want and poverty, such

an inborn mental superiority to low and uncomfortable circumstances, that he rose without effort into a region encompassed with felicities, untroubled by a care or sorrow. He always reminded me of that favorite child of the genii who carried an amulet in his bosom by which all the gold and jewels of the Sultan's halls were no sooner beheld than they became his own. If he sat down companionless to a solitary chop, his imagination transformed it straightway into a fine shoulder of mutton. When he looked out of his dingy old windows on the four bleak elms in front of his dwelling, he saw, or thought he saw, a vast forest, and he could hear in the note of one poor sparrow even the silvery voices of a hundred nightingales. Such a man might often be cold and hungry, but he had the wit never to be aware of it.

Hunt's love for Procter was deep and tender, and in one of his notes to me he says, referring to the meeting my memory has been trying to describe, "I have reasons for liking our dear friend Procter's wine beyond what you saw when we dined together at his table the other day." Procter prefixed a memoir of the life and writings of Ben Jonson to the great dramatist's works printed by Moxon in 1838. I happen to be the lucky owner of a copy of this edition that once belonged to Leigh Hunt, who has enriched it and perfumed the pages, as it were, by his annotations. The memoir abounds in

felicities of expression, and is the best brief chronicle yet made of rare Ben and his poetry. Leigh Hunt has filled the margins with his own neat handwriting, and as I turn over the leaves, thus companioned, I seem to meet those two loving brothers in modern song, and have again the benefit of their sweet society, — a society redolent of

> "The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,
> And all the sweet serenity of books."

I shall not soon forget the first morning I walked with Procter and Kenyon to the famous house No. 22 St. James Place, overlooking the Green Park, to a breakfast with Samuel Rogers. Mixed up with this matutinal rite was much that belongs to the modern literary and political history of England. Fox, Burke, Talleyrand, Grattan, Walter Scott, and many other great ones have sat there and held converse on divers matters with the banker-poet. For more than half a century the wits and the wise men honored that unpretending mansion with their presence. On my way thither for the first time my companions related anecdote after anecdote of the "ancient bard," as they called our host, telling me also how all his life long the poet of Memory had been giving substantial aid to poor authors; how he had befriended Sheridan, and how good he had been to Campbell in his sorest needs. Intellectual or artistic excellence was a sure passport to his *salon*, and his door never turned on reluctant hinges to

ROGERS.

admit the unfriended man of letters who needed his aid and counsel.

We arrived in quite an expectant mood, to find our host already seated at the head of his table, and his good man Edmund standing behind his chair. As we entered the room, and I saw Rogers sitting there so venerable and strange, I was reminded of that line of Wordsworth's,

"The oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray hair."

But old as he was, he seemed full of *verve*, vivacity, and decision. Knowing his homage for Ben Franklin, I had brought to him as a gift from America an old volume issued by the patriot printer in 1741. He was delighted with my little present, and began at once to say how much he thought of Franklin's prose. He considered the style admirable, and declared that it might be studied now for improvement in the art of composition. One of the guests that morning was the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the scholarly editor of Beaumont and Fletcher, and he very soon drew Rogers out on the subject of Warren Hastings's trial. It seemed ghostly enough to hear that famous event depicted by one who sat in the great hall of William Rufus; who day after day had looked on and listened to the eloquence of Fox and Sheridan; who had heard Edmund Burke raise his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded, and impeach Warren Hastings, "in the

name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, as the common enemy and oppressor of all." It thrilled me to hear Rogers say, "As I walked up Parliament Street with Mrs. Siddons, after hearing Sheridan's great speech, we both agreed that never before could human lips have uttered more eloquent words." That morning Rogers described to us the appearance of Grattan as he first saw and heard him when he made his first speech in Parliament. "Some of us were inclined to laugh," said he, "at the orator's Irish brogue when he began his speech that day, but after he had been on his legs five minutes nobody dared to laugh any more." Then followed personal anecdotes of Madame De Staël, the Duke of Wellington, Walter Scott, Tom Moore, and Sydney Smith, all exquisitely told. Both our host and his friend Procter had known or entertained most of the celebrities of their day. Procter soon led the conversation up to matters connected with the stage, and thinking of John Kemble and Edmund Kean, I ventured to ask Rogers who of all the great actors he had seen bore away the palm. "I have looked upon a magnificent procession of them," he said, "in my time, and I never saw any one superior to *David Garrick*." He then repeated Hannah More's couplet on receiving as a gift from Mrs. Garrick the shoe-buckles which once belonged to the great actor: —

"Thy buckles, O Garrick, another may use,
But none shall be found who can tread in thy shoes."

We applauded his memory and his manner of reciting the lines, which seemed to please him. "How much can sometimes be put into an epigram!" he said to Procter, and asked him if he remembered the lines about Earl Grey and the Kaffir war. Procter did not recall them, and Rogers set off again: —

"A dispute has arisen of late at the Cape,
As touching the devil, his color and shape;
While some folks contend that the devil is white,
The others aver that he 's black as midnight;
But now 't is decided quite right in this way,
And all are convinced that the devil is *Grey*."

We asked him if he remembered the theatrical excitement in London when Garrick and his troublesome contemporary, Barry, were playing King Lear at rival houses, and dividing the final opinion of the critics. "Yes," said he, "perfectly. I saw both those wonderful actors, and fully agreed at the time with the admirable epigram that ran like wildfire into every nook and corner of society." "Did the epigram still live in his memory?" we asked. The old man seemed looking across the misty valley of time for a few moments, and then gave it without a pause: —

"The town have chosen different ways
To praise their different Lears;
To Barry they give loud applause,
To Garrick only tears."

"A king! ay, every inch a king,
Such Barry doth appear;
But Garrick 's quite another thing,—
He 's every inch *King Lear!*"

Among other things which Rogers told us that morning, I remember he had much to say of Byron's *forgetfulness* as to all manner of things. As an evidence of his inaccuracy, Rogers related how the noble bard had once quoted to him some lines on Venice as Southey's "which he wanted me to admire," said Rogers; "and as I wrote them myself, I had no hesitation in doing so. The lines are in my poem on Italy, and begin,

"'There is a glorious city in the sea.'"

Samuel Lawrence had recently painted in oils a portrait of Rogers, and we asked to see it; so Edmund was sent up stairs to get it, and bring it to the table. Rogers himself wished to compare it with his own face, and had a looking-glass held before him. We sat by in silence as he regarded the picture attentively, and waited for his criticism. Soon he burst out with, "Is my nose so d——y sharp as that?" We all exclaimed, "No! no! the artist is at fault there, sir." "I thought so," he cried; "he has painted the face of a dead man, d—n him!" Some one said, "The portrait is too hard." "I won't be painted as a hard man," rejoined Rogers. "I am not a hard man, am I, Procter?" asked the old poet. Procter deprecated

with energy such an idea as that. Looking at the portrait again, Rogers said, with great feeling, "Children would run away from that face, and they never ran away from me!" Notwithstanding all he had to say against the portrait, I thought it a wonderful likeness, and a painting of great value. Moxon, the publisher, who was present, asked for a certain portfolio of engraved heads which had been made from time to time of Rogers, and this was brought and opened for our examination of its contents. Rogers insisted upon looking over the portraits, and he amused us by his cutting comments on each one as it came out of the portfolio. "This," said he, holding one up, "is the head of a cunning fellow, and this the face of a debauched clergyman, and this the visage of a shameless drunkard!" After a comic discussion of the pictures of himself, which went on for half an hour, he said, "It is time to change the topic, and set aside the little man for a very great one. Bring me my collection of Washington portraits." These were brought in, and he had much to say of American matters. He remembered being told, when a boy, by his father one day, that "a fight had recently occurred at a place called Bunker Hill, in America." He then inquired about Webster and the monument. He had met Webster in England, and greatly admired him. Now and then his memory was at fault, and he spoke occasionally of events as still exist-

ing which had happened half a century before. I remember what a shock it gave me when he asked me if Alexander Hamilton had printed any new pamphlets lately, and begged me to send him anything that distinguished man might publish after I got home to America.

I recollect how delighted I was when Rogers sent me an invitation the second time to breakfast with him. On that occasion the poet spoke of being in Paris on a pleasure-tour with Daniel Webster, and he grew eloquent over the great American orator's genius. He also referred with enthusiasm to Bryant's poetry, and quoted with deep feeling the first three verses of "The Future Life." When he pronounced the lines: —

> "My name on earth was ever in thy prayer,
> And must thou never utter it in heaven?"

his voice trembled, and he faltered out, "I cannot go on: there is something in that poem which breaks me down, and I must never try again to recite verses so full of tenderness and undying love."

For Longfellow's poems, then just published in England, he expressed the warmest admiration, and thought the author of "Voices of the Night" one of the most perfect artists in English verse who had ever lived.

Rogers's reminiscences of Holland House that morning were a series of delightful pictures painted

by an artist who left out none of the salient features, but gave to everything he touched a graphic reality. In his narrations the eloquent men, the fine ladies, he had seen there assembled again around their noble host and hostess, and one listened in the pleasant breakfast-room in St. James Place to the wit and wisdom of that brilliant company which met fifty years ago in the great *salon* of that princely mansion, which will always be famous in the literary and political history of England.

Rogers talked that morning with inimitable finish and grace of expression. A light seemed to play over his faded features when he recalled some happy past experience, and his eye would sometimes fill as he glanced back among his kindred, all now dead save one, his sister, who also lived to a great age. His head was very fine, and I never could quite understand the satirical sayings about his personal appearance which have crept into the literary gossip of his time. He was by no means the vivacious spectre some of his contemporaries have represented him, and I never thought of connecting him with that terrible line in "The Mirror of Magistrates," —

> "His withered fist still striking at Death's door."

His dome of brain was one of the amplest and most perfectly shaped I ever saw, and his countenance was very far from unpleasant. His faculties to en-

joy had not perished with age. He certainly looked like a well-seasoned author, but not dropping to pieces yet. His turn of thought was characteristic, and in the main just, for he loved the best, and was naturally impatient of what was low and mean in conduct and intellect. He had always lived in an atmosphere of art, and his reminiscences of painters and sculptors were never wearisome or dull. He had a store of pleasant anecdotes of Chantrey, whom he had employed as a wood-carver long before he became a modeller in clay; and he had also much to tell us of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose lectures he had attended, and whose studio-talk had been familiar to him while he was a young man and studying art himself as an amateur. It was impossible almost to make Rogers seem a real being as we used to surround his table during those mornings and sometimes deep into the afternoons. We were listening to one who had talked with Boswell about Dr. Johnson; who had sat hours with Mrs. Piozzi; who read the "Vicar of Wakefield" the day it was published; who had heard Haydn, the composer, playing at a concert, "dressed out with a sword"; who had listened to Talleyrand's best sayings from his own lips; who had seen John Wesley lying dead in his coffin, "an old man, with the countenance of a little child"; who had been with Beckford at Fonthill; who had seen Porson slink back into the dining-room after the company had left

it and drain what was left in the wineglasses; who had crossed the Apennines with Byron; who had seen Beau Nash in the height of his career dancing minuets at Bath; who had known Lady Hamilton in her days of beauty, and seen her often with Lord Nelson; who was in Fox's room when that great man lay dying; and who could describe Pitt from personal observation, speaking always as if his mouth was "full of worsted." It was unreal as a dream to sit there in St. James Place and hear that old man talk by the hour of what one had been reading about all one's life. One thing, I must confess, somewhat shocked me, — I was not prepared for the feeble manner in which some of Rogers's best stories were received by the gentlemen who had gathered at his table on those Tuesday mornings. But when Procter told me in explanation afterward that they had all "heard the same anecdotes every week, perhaps, for half a century from the same lips," I no longer wondered at the seeming apathy I had witnessed. It was a great treat to me, however, the talk I heard at Rogers's hospitable table, and my three visits there cannot be erased from the pleasantest tablets of memory. There is only one regret connected with them, but that loss still haunts me. On one of those memorable mornings I was obliged to leave earlier than the rest of the company on account of an engagement out of London, and Lady Beecher (formerly

Miss O'Neil), the great actress of other days, came in and read an hour to the old poet and his guests. Procter told me afterward that among other things she read, at Rogers's request, the 14th chapter of Isaiah, and that her voice and manner seemed like inspiration.

Seeing and talking with Rogers was, indeed, like living in the past: and one may imagine how weird it seemed to a raw Yankee youth, thus facing the man who might have shaken hands with Dr. Johnson. I ventured to ask him one day if he had ever seen the doctor. "No," said he, "but I went down to Bolt Court in 1782 with the intention of making Dr. Johnson's acquaintance. I raised the knocker tremblingly, and hearing the shuffling footsteps as of an old man in the entry, my heart failed me, and I put down the knocker softly again, and crept back into Fleet Street without seeing the vision I was not bold enough to encounter." I thought it was something to have heard the footsteps of old Sam Johnson stirring about in that ancient entry, and for my own part I was glad to look upon the man whose ears had been so strangely privileged.

Rogers drew about him all the musical as well as the literary talent of London. Grisi and Jenny Lind often came of a morning to sing their best *arias* to him when he became too old to attend the opera; and both Adelaide and Fanny Kemble brought to

LESLIE.

him frequently the rich tributes of their genius in art.

It was my good fortune, through the friendship of Procter, to make the acquaintance, at Rogers's table, of Leslie, the artist, — a warm friend of the old poet, — and to be taken round by him and shown all the principal private galleries in London. He first drew my attention to the pictures by Constable, and pointed out their quiet beauty to my uneducated eye, thus instructing me to hate all those intemperate landscapes and lurid compositions which abound in the shambles of modern art. In the company of Leslie I saw my first Titians and Vandycks, and felt, as Northcote says, on my good behavior in the presence of portraits so lifelike and inspiring. It was Leslie who inoculated me with a love of Gainsborough, before whose perfect pictures a spectator involuntarily raises his hat and stands uncovered. (And just here let me advise every art lover who goes to England to visit the little Dulwich Gallery, only a few miles from London, and there to spend an hour or two among the exquisite Gainsboroughs. No small collection in Europe is better worth a visit, and the place itself in summer-time is enchanting with greenery.)

As Rogers's dining-room abounded in only first-rate works of art, Leslie used to take round the guests and make us admire the Raphaels and Correggios. Inserted in the walls on each side of the

mantel-piece, like tiles, were several of Turner's original oil and water-color drawings, which that supreme artist had designed to illustrate Rogers's "Poems" and "Italy." Long before Ruskin made those sketches world-famous in his "Modern Painters," I have heard Leslie point out their beauties with as fine an enthusiasm. He used to say that they purified the whole atmosphere round St. James Place!

Procter had a genuine regard for Count d'Orsay, and he pointed him out to me one day sitting in the window of his club, near Gore House, looking out on Piccadilly. The count seemed a little past his prime, but was still the handsomest man in London. Procter described him as a brilliant person, of special ability, and by no means a mer dandy.

I first saw Procter's friend, John Forster, the biographer of Goldsmith and Dickens, in his pleasant rooms, No. 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields. He was then in his prime, and looked brimful of energy. His age might have been forty, or a trifle onward from that mile-stone, and his whole manner announced a determination to assert that nobody need prompt *him*. His voice rang loud and clear, up stairs and down, everywhere throughout his premises. When he walked over the uncarpeted floor, you *heard* him walk, and he meant you should. When *he* spoke, nobody required an ear-trumpet; the deaf never

D'ORSAY.

lost a syllable of his manly utterances. Procter and he were in the same Commission, and were on excellent terms, the younger officer always regarding the elder with a kind of leonine deference.

It was to John Forster these charming lines were addressed by Barry Cornwall, when the poet sent his old friend a present of Shakespeare's Works. A more exquisite compliment was never conveyed in verse so modest and so perfect in simple grace: —

"I do not know a man who better reads
Or weighs the great thoughts of the book I send, —
Better than he whom I have called my friend
For twenty years and upwards. He who feeds
Upon Shakesperian pastures never needs
The humbler food which springs from plains below;
Yet may he love the little flowers that blow,
And him excuse who for their beauty pleads.

"Take then my Shakespeare to some sylvan nook;
And pray thee, in the name of Days of old,
Good-will and friendship, never bought or sold,
Give me assurance thou wilt always look
With kindness still on Spirits of humbler mould;
Kept firm by resting on that wondrous book,
Wherein the Dream of Life is all unrolled."

Forster's library was filled with treasures, and he brought to the dinner-table, the day I was first with him, such rare and costly manuscripts and annotated volumes to show us, that one's appetite for "made dishes" was quite taken away. The excellent lady whom he afterward married was one of the guests,

and among the gentlemen present I remember the brilliant author of "The Bachelor of the Albany," a book that was then the Novel sensation in London. Forster flew from one topic to another with admirable skill, and entertained us with anecdotes of Wellington and Rogers, gilding the time with capital imitations of his celebrated contemporaries in literature and on the stage. A touch about Edmund Kean made us all start from our chairs and demand a mimetic repetition. Forster must have been an excellent private actor, for he had power and skill quite exceptional in that way. His force carried him along wherever he chose to go, and when he played "Kitely," his ability must have been strikingly apparent. After his marriage, and when he removed from Lincoln's Inn to his fine residence at "Palace-Gate House," he gave frequent readings, evincing remarkable natural and acquired talents. For Dickens he had a love amounting to jealousy. He never quite relished anybody else whom the great novelist had a fondness for, and I have heard droll stories touching this weakness. For Professor Felton he had unbounded regard, which had grown up by correspondence and through report from Dickens. He had never met Felton, and when the professor arrived in London, Dickens, with his love of fun, arranged a bit of cajolery, which was never quite forgotten, though wholly forgiven. Knowing how highly Forster

esteemed Felton, through his writings and his letters, Dickens resolved to take Felton at once to Forster's house and introduce him as *Professor Stowe*, the *port* of both these gentlemen being pretty nearly equal. The Stowes were then in England on their triumphant tour, and this made the attempt at deception an easy one. So, Felton being in the secret, he and Dickens proceed to Forster's house and are shown in. Down comes Forster into the library, and is presented forthwith to "*Professor Stowe.*" "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is at once referred to, and the talk goes on in that direction for some time. At last both Dickens and Felton fell into such a paroxysm of laughter at Forster's dogged determination to be complimentary to the world-renowned novel, that they could no longer hold out; and Forster, becoming almost insane with wonder at the hilarious conduct of his two visitors, Dickens revealed their wickedness, and a right jolly day the happy trio made of it.

Talfourd informs us that Forster had become to Charles Lamb as one of his oldest companions, and that Mary also cherished a strong regard for him. It is surely a proof of his admirable qualities that the love of so many of England's best and greatest was secured to him by so lasting a tenure. To have the friendship of Landor, Dickens, and Procter through long years; to have Carlyle for a constant

votary, and to be mourned by him with an abiding sorrow, — these are no slight tributes to purity of purpose.

Forster had that genuine sympathy with men of letters which entitled him to be their biographer, and all his works in that department have a special charm, habitually gained only by a subtle and earnest intellect.

It is a singular coincidence that the writers of two of the most brilliant records of travel of their time should have been law students in Barry Cornwall's office. Kinglake, the author of "Eothen," and Warburton, the author of "The Crescent and the Cross," were at one period both engaged as pupils in their profession under the guidance of Mr. Procter. He frequently spoke with pride of his two law students, and when Warburton perished at sea, his grief for his brilliant friend was deep and abiding. Kinglake's later literary fame was always a pleasure to the historian's old master, and no one in England loved better to point out the fine passages in the "History of the Invasion of the Crimea" than the old poet in Weymouth Street.

"Blackwood" and the "Quarterly Review" railed at Procter and his author friends for a long period; but how true is the saying of Macaulay, "that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written *about* them, but by

HAZLITT

what is written in them!" No man was more decried in his day than Procter's friend, William Hazlitt. The poet had for the critic a genuine admiration; and I have heard him dilate with a kind of rapture over the critic's fine sayings, quoting abundant passages from the essays. Procter would never hear any disparagement of his friend's ability and keenness. I recall his earnest but restrained indignation one day, when some person compared Hazlitt with a diffusive modern writer of notes on the theatre, and I remember with what contempt, in his sweet forgivable way, the old man spoke of much that passes nowadays for criticism. He said Hazlitt was exactly the opposite of Lord Chesterfield, who advised his son, if he could not get at a thing in a straight line to try the serpentine one. There were no crooked pathways in Hazlitt's intellect. His style is brilliant, but never cloyed with ornamentation. Hazlitt's paper on Gifford was thought by Procter to be as pungent a bit of writing as had appeared in his day, and he quoted this paragraph as a sample of its biting justice: "Mr. Gifford is admirably qualified for the situation he has held for many years as editor of the 'Quarterly' by a happy combination of defects, natural and acquired." In one of his letters to me Procter writes, "I despair of the age that has forgotten to read Hazlitt."

Procter was a delightful prose writer, as well as

a charming poet. Having met in old magazines and annuals several of his essays and stories, and admiring their style and spirit, I induced him, after much persuasion, to collect and publish in America his prose works. The result was a couple of volumes, which were brought out in Boston in 1853. In them there are perhaps no "thoughts that wander through eternity," but they abound in fancies which the reader will recognize as agile

"Daughters of the earth and sun."

In them there is nothing loud or painful, and whoever really loves "a good book," and knows it to be such on trial, will find Barry Cornwall's "Essays and Tales in Prose" most delectable reading. "Imparadised," as Milton hath the word, on a summer hillside, or tented by the cool salt wave, no better afternoon literature can be selected. One will never meet with distorted metaphor or tawdry rhetoric in Barry's thoughtful pages, but will find a calm philosophy and a beautiful faith, very precious and profitable in these days of doubt and insecurity of intellect. There is a respite and a sympathy in this fine spirit, and so I commend him heartily in times so full of turmoil and suspicion as these. One of the stories in the first volume of these prose writings, called "The Man-Hunter," is quite equal in power to any of the graphic pieces of a similar character ever written by De Quincey or Dickens,

but the tone in these books is commonly more tender and inclining to melancholy. What, for instance, could be more heart-moving than these passages of his on the death of little children?

"I scarcely know how it is, but the deaths of children seem to me always less premature than those of elder persons. Not that they are in fact so; but it is because they themselves have little or no relation to time or maturity. Life seems a race which they have yet to run entirely. They have made no progress toward the goal They are born — nothing further. But it seems hard, when a man has toiled high up the steep hill of knowledge, that he should be cast like Sisyphus, downward in a moment; that he who has worn the day and wasted the night in gathering the gold of science should be, with all his wealth of learning, all his accumulations, made bankrupt at once. What becomes of all the riches of the soul, the piles and pyramids of precious thoughts which men heap together? Where are Shakespeare's imagination, Bacon's learning, Galileo's dream? Where is the sweet fancy of Sidney, the airy spirit of Fletcher, and Milton's thought severe? Methinks such things should not die and dissipate, when a hair can live for centuries, and a brick of Egypt will last three thousand years! I am content to believe that the mind of man survives (somewhere or other) his clay.

"I was once present at the death of a little child. I will not pain the reader by portraying its agonies; but when its breath was gone, its *life*, (nothing more than a cloud of smoke!) and it lay like a waxen image before me, I turned my eyes to its moaning mother, and sighed out my few words of comfort. But I am a beggar in grief. I can feel and sigh and look kindly, I think; but I have nothing to give. My tongue deserts me. I know the inutility of too soon comforting. I know that *I* should weep were I the loser, and I let the tears have their way. Sometimes a

word or two I can muster: a 'Sigh no more!' and 'Dear lady, do not grieve!' but further I am mute and useless."

I have many letters and kind little notes which Procter used to write me during the years I knew him best. His tricksy fancies peeped out in his correspondence, and several of his old friends in England thought no literary man of his time had a better epistolary style. His neat and elegant chirography on the back of a letter was always a delightful foretaste of something good inside, and I never received one of his welcome missives that did not contain, no matter how brief it happened to be, welcome passages of wit or affectionate interest.

In one of his early letters to me he says: —

"There is no one rising hereabouts in literature. I suppose our national genius is taking a mechanical turn. And, in truth, it is much better to make a good steam-engine than to manufacture a bad poem. 'Building the lofty rhyme' is a good thing, but our present buildings are of a low order, and seldom reach the Attic. This piece of wit will scarcely throw you into a fit, I imagine, your risible muscles being doubtless kept in good order."

In another he writes: —

"I see you have some capital names in the 'Atlantic Monthly.' If they will only put forth their strength, there is no doubt as to the result, but the misfortune is that persons who write anonymously *don't* put forth their strength, in general. I was a magazine writer for no less than a dozen years, and I felt that no personal credit or responsibility attached to my literary trifling, and although I sometimes did pretty well (for me), yet I never did my best."

As I read over again the portfolio of his letters to me, bearing date from 1848 to 1866, I find many passages of interest, but most of them are too personal for type. A few extracts, however, I cannot resist copying. Some of his epistles are enriched with a song or a sonnet, then just written, and there are also frequent references in them to American editions of his poetical and prose works, which he collected at the request of his Boston publishers.

In June, 1851, he writes:—

"I have encountered a good many of your countrymen here lately, but have been introduced only to a few. I found Mr. Norton, who has returned to you, and Mr. Dwight, who is still here, I believe, very intelligent and agreeable.

"If all Americans were like them and yourself, and if all Englishmen were like Kenyon and (so far as regards a desire to judge fairly) myself, I think there would be little or no quarrelling between our small island and your great continent.

"Our glass palace is a perpetual theme for small-talk. It usurps the place of the weather, which is turned adrift, or laid up in ordinary for future use. Nevertheless it (I mean the palace) is a remarkable achievement, after all; and I speak sincerely when I say, 'All honor and glory to Paxton!' If the strings of my poor little lyre were not rusty and overworn, I think I should try to sing some of my nonsense verses before his image, and add to the idolatry already existing.

"If you have hotter weather in America than that which is at present burning and blistering us here, you are entitled to pity. If it continue much longer, I shall be held in solution for the remainder of my days, and shall be remark-

able as 'Oxygen, the poet' (reduced to his natural weakness and simplicity by the hot summer of 1851), instead of

"Your very sincere and obliged

"B. W. Procter."

Here is a brief reference to Judd's remarkable novel, forming part of a note written to me in 1852: —

"Thanks for 'Margaret' (the book, *not* the woman), that you have sent me. When will you want it back? and who is the author? There is a great deal of clever writing in it, — great observation of nature, and also of character among a certain class of persons. *But* it is almost too minute, and for *me* decidedly too theological. You see what irreligious people we are here. I shall come over to one of your camp-meetings and *try* to be converted. What will they administer in such a case? brimstone or brandy? I shall try the latter first."

Here is a letter bearing date "Thursday night, November 25, 1852," in which he refers to his own writings, and copies a charming song: —

"Your letter, announcing the arrival of the little preface, reached me last night. I shall look out for the book in about three weeks hence, as you tell me that they are all printed. You Americans are a rapid race. When I thought you were in Scotland, lo, you had touched the soil of Boston; and when I thought you were unpacking my poor MS., tumbling it out of your great trunk, behold! it is arranged — it is in the printer's hands — it is *printed* — published — it is — ah! would I could add, SOLD! That, after all, is the grand triumph in Boston as well as London.

"Well, since it is not sold yet, let us be generous and give a few copies away. Indeed, such is my weakness, that I would sometimes rather give than sell. In the present

instance you will do me the kindness to send a copy each to Mr. Charles Sumner, Mr. Hillard, Mr. Norton: but no — my wife requests to be the donor to Mr. Norton, so you must, if you please, write his name in the first leaf and state that it comes from '*Mrs.* Procter.' I liked him very much when I met him in London, and I should wish him to be reminded of his English acquaintance.

"I am writing to you at eleven o'clock at night, after a long and busy day, and I write *now* rather than wait for a little inspiration, because the mail, I believe, starts to-morrow. The unwilling Minerva is at my elbow, and I feel that every sentence I write, were it pounded ten times in a mortar, would come out again unleavened and heavy. Braying some people in a mortar, you know, is but a weary and unprofitable process.

"You speak of London as a delightful place. I don't know how it may be in the white-bait season, but at present it is foggy, rainy, cold, dull. Half of us are unwell and the other half dissatisfied. Some are apprehensive of an invasion, — not an impossible event; some writing odes to the Duke of Wellington; and I am putting my good friend to sleep with the flattest prose that ever dropped from an English pen. I wish that it were better; I wish that it were even worse; but it is the most undeniable twaddle. I must go to bed, and invoke the Muses in the morning. At present, I cannot touch one of their petticoats.

"A SLEEPY SONG.

"Sing! sing me to sleep!
With gentle words, in some sweet slumberous measure,
Such as lone poet on some shady steep
Sings to the silence in his noonday leisure.

"Sing! as the river sings,
When gently it flows between soft banks of flowers,
And the bee murmurs, and the cuckoo brings
His faint May music, 'tween the golden showers.

"Sing! O divinest tone!
I sink beneath some wizard's charming wand;
I yield, I move, by soothing breezes blown,
O'er twilight shores, into the Dreaming Land!

"I read the above to you when you were in London. It will appear in an Annual edited by Miss Power (Lady Blessington's niece).

"*Friday Morning.*

"The wind blowing down the chimney; the rain sprinkling my windows. The English Apollo hides his head — you can scarcely see him on the 'misty mountain-tops' (those brick ones which you remember in Portland Place).

"My friend Thackeray is gone to America, and I hope is, by this time, in the United States. He goes to New York, and afterward I *suppose* (but I don't know) to Boston and Philadelphia. Have you seen *Esmond?* There are parts of it charmingly written. His pathos is to me very touching. I believe that the best mode of making one's way to a person's head is — through his heart.

"I hope that your literary men will like some of my little prose matters. I know that they will *try* to like them; but the papers have been written so long, and all, or almost all, written so hastily, that I have my misgivings. However, they must take their chance.

"Had I leisure to complete something that I began two or three years ago, and in which I have written a chapter or two, I should reckon more surely on success; but I shall probably never finish the thing, although I contemplated only one volume.

"(If you cannot read this letter apply to the printer's devil. — Hibernicus.)

"Farewell. All good be with you. My wife desires to be kindly remembered by you.

"Always yours, very sincerely,

"B. W. Procter.

"P. S. — Can you contrive to send Mr. Willis a copy of the prose book? If so, pray do."

In February, 1853, he writes: —

"Those famous volumes, the advent of which was some time since announced by the great transatlantic trumpet, have duly arrived. My wife is properly grateful for her copy, which, indeed, impresses both of us with respect for the American skill in binding. Neither too gay to be gaudy, nor too grave, so as to affect the theological, it hits that happy medium which agrees with the tastes of most people and disgusts none. We should flatter ourselves that it is intended to represent the matter within, but that we are afraid of incurring the sin of vanity, and the indiscretion of taking appearances too much upon trust. We suspend our conjectures on this very interesting subject. The whole getting up of the book is excellent.

"For the little scraps of (critical) sugar enclosed in your letter, due thanks. These will sweeten our imagination for some time to come.

"I have been obliged to give all the copies you sent me away. I dare say you will not grudge me four or five copies more, to be sent at your convenience, of course. Let me hear from you at the same time. You can give me one of those frequent quarters of an hour which I know you now devote to a meditation on 'things in general.'

"I am glad that you like Thackeray. He is well worth your liking. I trust to his making both friends and money in America, and to his *keeping* both. I am not so sure of the money, however, for he has a liberal hand. I should have liked to have been at one of the dinners you speak of. (When shall you begin that *bridge?* You seem to be a long time about it. It will, I dare say, be a bridge of boats, after all.) . . . .

"I was reading (rather re-reading) the other evening the introductory chapter to the 'Scarlet Letter.' It is admirably written. Not having any great sympathy with a custom-house, — nor, indeed, with Salem, except that it seems to be Hawthorne's birthplace, — all my attention was concentrated on the *style*, which seems to me excellent.

"The most striking book which has been recently published here is 'Villette,' by the authoress of 'Jane Eyre,' who, as you know, is a Miss Bronte. The book does not give one the most pleasing notion of the authoress, perhaps, but it is very clever, graphic, vigorous. It is 'man's meat,' and not the whipped syllabub, which is *all* froth, without any jam at the bottom. The scene of the drama is Brussels.

"I was sorry to hear of poor Willis. Our critics here were too severe upon him. . . . .

"The Frost King (vulg. Jack Frost) has come down upon us with all his might. Banished from the pleasant shores of Boston, he has come with his cold scythe and ice pincers to our undefended little island, and is tyrannizing in every corner and over every part of every person. Nothing is too great for him, nothing too mean. He condescends even to lay hold of the nose (an offence for which any one below the dignity of a King — or a President — would be kicked). As for me, I have taken refuge in

"A SONG, WITH A MORAL.

"When the winter bloweth loud,
And the earth is in a shroud,
Frozen rain or sleety snow
Dimming every dream below, —
There is e'er a spot of green
Whence the heavens may be seen.

"When our purse is shrinking fast,
And our friend is lost, (the last!)
And the world doth pour its pain,
Sharper than the frozen rain, —
There is still a spot of green
Whence the heavens may be seen.

"Let us never meet despair
While the little spot is there;

Winter brighteneth into May,
And sullen night to sunny day, —
Seek we then the spot of green
Whence the heavens may be seen.

"I have left myself little space for more small-talk. I must, therefore, conclude with wishing that your English dreams may continue bright, and that when they begin to fade you will come and *relume* at one of the white-bait dinners of which you used to talk in such terms of rapture.

"Have I space to say that I am very truly yours?

"B. W. Procter."

A few months later, in the same year (1853), he sits by his open window in London, on a morning of spring, and sends off the following pleasant words: —

"You also must now be in the first burst and sunshine of spring. Your spear-grass is showing its points, your succulent grass its richness, even your little plant [?] (so useful for certain invalids) is seen here and there; primroses are peeping out in your neighborhood, and you are looking for cowslips to come. I say nothing of your hawthorns (from the common May to the classic Nathaniel), except that I trust they are thriving, and like to put forth a world of blossoms soon.

'With all this wealth, present and future,
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose,'

you will doubtless feel disposed to scatter your small coins abroad on the poor, and, among other things, to forward to your humble correspondent those copies of B—— C——'s prose works which you promised I know not how long ago. 'He who gives *speedily*,' they say, 'gives twice.' I quote, as you see, from the Latins.

"I have just got the two additional volumes of De Quin-

cey, for which — thanks! I have not seen Mr. Parker, who brought them, and who left his card here yesterday, but I have asked if he will come and breakfast with me on Sunday, — my only certain leisure day. Your De Quincey is a man of a good deal of reading, and has thought on divers and sundry matters; but he is evidently so thoroughly well pleased with the Sieur 'Thomas De Quincey' that his self-sufficiency spoils even his best works. Then some of his facts are, I hear, *quasi* facts only, not unfrequently. He has his moments when he sleeps, and becomes oblivious of all but the aforesaid 'Thomas,' who pervades both his sleeping and waking visions. I, like all authors, am glad to have a little praise now and then (it is my hydromel), but it must be dispensed by others. I do not think it decent to manufacture the sweet liquor myself, and I hate a coxcomb, whether in dress or print.

"We have little or no literary news here. Our poets are all going to the poorhouse (except Tennyson), and our prose writers are piling up their works for the next 5th of November, when there will be a great bonfire. It is deuced lucky that my immortal (ah! I am De Quinceying) — I mean my humble — performances were printed in America, so that they will escape. By the by, are they on foolscap? for I forgot to caution you on that head.

"I have been spending a week at Liverpool, where I rejoiced to hear that Hawthorne's appointment was settled, and that it was a valuable post; but I hear that it lasts for three years only. This is melancholy. I hope, however, that he will 'realize' (as you transatlantics say) as much as he can during his consulate, and that your next President will have the good taste and the good sense to renew his lease for three years more.

"I have not seen Mrs. Stowe. I shall probably meet her somewhere or other when she comes to London.

"I dare not ask after Mr. Longfellow. He was kind enough to write me a very agreeable letter some time ago, which I ought to have answered. I dare say that he has for-

gotten it, but my conscience is a serpent that gives me a bite or a sting every now and then when I think of him. The first time I am in fit condition (I mean in point of brightness) to reply to so famous a correspondent, I shall try what an English pen and ink will enable me to say. In the mean time, God be thanked for all things!

"My wife heard from Thackeray about ten days ago. He speaks gratefully of the kindness that he has met with in America. Among other things, it appears that he has seen something of your slaves, whom he represents as leading a very easy life, and as being fat, cheerful, and happy. Nevertheless, *I* (for one) would rather be a free man, — such is the singularity of my opinions. If my prosings should ever in the course of the next twenty years require to be reprinted, pray take note of the above opinion.

"And now I have no more paper; I have scarcely room left to say that I hope you are well, and to remind you that for your ten lines of writing I have sent you back a hundred. Give my best compliments to all whom I know, personally or otherwise. God be with you!

"Yours, very sincerely,

"B. W. Procter."

Procter always seemed to be astounded at the travelling spirit of Americans, and in his letters he makes frequent reference to our "national propensity," as he calls it.

"Half an hour ago," he writes in July, 1853, "we had three of your countrymen here to lunch, — countrymen, I mean, Hibernically, for two of them wore petticoats. They are all going to Switzerland, France, Italy, Egypt, and Syria. What an adventurous race you are, you Americans! Here the women go merely 'from the blue bed to the brown,' and think that they have travelled and seen the world. I myself should not care much to be confined to a circle reaching six or seven miles round London. There are

the fresh winds and wild thyme on Hampstead Heath, and from Richmond you may survey the Naiades. Highgate, where Coleridge lived, Enfield, where Charles Lamb dwelt, are not far off. Turning eastward, there is the river Lea, in which Izaak Walton fished; and farther on — ha! what do I see? What are those little fish frisking in the batter (the great Naval Hospital close by), which fixed the affections of the enamored American while he resided in London, and have been floating in his dreams ever since? They are said by the naturalists to be of the species *Blandamentum album*, and are by vulgar aldermen spoken carelessly of as *white-bait*.

"London is full of carriages, full of strangers, full of parties feasting on strawberries and ices and other things intended to allay the heat of summer; but the Summer herself (fickle virgin) keeps back, or has been stopped somewhere or other, — perhaps at the Liverpool custom-house, where the very brains of men (their books) are held in durance, as I know to my cost.

"Thackeray is about to publish a new work in numbers, — a serial, as the newspapers call it. Thomas Carlyle is publishing (a sixpenny matter) in favor of the slave-trade. Novelists of all shades are plying their trades. Husbands are killing their wives in every day's newspaper. Burglars are peaching against each other; there is no longer honor among thieves. I am starting for Leicester on a week's expedition amidst the mad people; and the Emperor of Russia has crossed the Pruth, and intends to make a tour of Turkey.

"All this appears to me little better than idle, restless vanity. O my friend, what a fuss and a pother we are all making, we little flies who are going round on the great wheel of time! To-day we are flickering and buzzing about, our little bits of wings glittering in the sunshine, and to-morrow we are safe enough in the little crevice at the back of the fireplace, or hid in the folds of the old curtain, shut up, stiff and torpid, for the long winter. What do you say to that profound reflection?

"I struggle against the lassitude which besets me, and strive in vain to be either sensible or jocose. I had better say farewell."

On Christmas day, 1854, he writes in rather flagging spirits, induced by ill health : —

"I have owed you a letter for these many months, my good friend. I am afraid to think *how* long, lest the interest on the debt should have exceeded the capital, and be beyond my power to pay.

"You must be good-natured and excuse me, for I have been ill — very frequently — and dispirited. A bodily complaint torments me, that has tormented me for the last two years. I no longer look at the world through a rose-colored glass. The prospect, I am sorry to say, is gray, grim, dull, barren, full of withered leaves, without flowers, or if there be any, all of them trampled down, soiled, discolored, and without fragrance. You see what a bit of half-smoked glass I am looking through. At all events, you must see how entirely I am disabled from returning, except in sober sentences, the lively and good-natured letters and other things which you have sent me from America. They were welcome, and I thank you for them now, in a few words, as you observe, but sincerely. I am somewhat brief, even in my gratitude. Had I been in braver spirits, I might have spurred my poor Pegasus, and sent you some lines on the Alma, or the Inkerman, — bloody battles, but exhibiting marks not to be mistaken of the old English heroism, which, after all is said about the enervating effects of luxury, is as grand and manifest as in the ancient fights which English history talks of so much. Even you, sternest of republicans, will, I think, be proud of the indomitable courage of Englishmen, and gladly refer to your old paternity. I, at least, should be proud of Americans fighting after the same fashion (and without doubt they *would* fight thus), just as old people exult in the brave conduct of their run-

away sons. I cannot read of these later battles without the tears coming into my eyes. It is said by 'our correspondent' at *New York* that the folks there rejoice in the losses and disasters of the allies. This can never be the case, surely? No one whose opinion is worth a rap can rejoice at any success of the Czar, whose double-dealing and unscrupulous greediness must have rendered him an object of loathing to every well-thinking man. But what have I to do with politics, or you? Our 'pleasant object and serene employ' are books, books. Let us return to pacific thoughts.

"What a number of things have happened since I saw you! I looked for you in the last spring, little dreaming that so fat and flourishing a 'Statesman' could be overthrown by a little fever. I had even begun some doggerel, announcing to you the advent of the white-bait, which I imagined were likely to be all eaten up in your absence. My memory is so bad that I cannot recollect half a dozen lines, probably not one, as it originally stood.

"I was at Liverpool last June. After two or three attempts I contrived to seize on the famous Nathaniel Hawthorne. Need I say that I like him *very* much? He is very sensible, very genial, — a little shy, I think (for an American!) — and altogether extremely agreeable. I wish that I could see more of him, but our orbits are wide apart. Now and then — once in two years — I diverge into and cross his circle, but at other times we are separated by a space amounting to 210 miles. He has three children, and a nice little wife, who has good-humor engraved on her countenance.

"As to verse — yes, I have begun a dozen trifling things, which are in my drawer unfinished; poor rags with ink upon them, none of them, I am afraid, properly labelled for posterity. I was for six weeks at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, this year, but so unwell that I could not write a line, scarcely read one; sitting out in the sun, eating, drinking, sleeping, and sometimes (poor soul!) imagining I

was thinking. One Sunday I saw a magnificent steamer go by, and on placing my eye to the telescope I saw some Stars and Stripes (streaming from the mast-head) that carried me away to Boston. By the way, when *will* you finish the bridge?

"I hear strange hints of you all quarrelling about the slave question. Is it so? You are so happy and prosperous in America that you must be on the lookout for clouds, surely! When you see Emerson, Longfellow, Sumner, any one I know, pray bespeak for me a kind thought or word from them."

Procter was always on the lookout for Hawthorne, whom he greatly admired. In November, 1855, he says, in a brief letter: —

"I have not seen Hawthorne since I wrote to you. He came to London this summer, but, I am sorry to say, did not inquire for me. As it turned out, I was absent from town, but sent him (by Mrs. Russell Sturgis) a letter of introduction to Leigh Hunt, who was very much pleased with him. Poor Hunt! he is the most genial of men; and, now that his wife is confined to her bed by rheumatism, is recovering himself, and, I hope, doing well. He asked to come and see me the other day. I willingly assented, and when I saw him — grown old and sad and broken down in health — all my ancient liking for him revived.

"You ask me to send you some verse. I accordingly send you a scrap of recent manufacture, and you will observe that instead of forwarding my epic on Sevastopol, I select something that is fitter for these present vernal love days than the bluster of heroic verse: —

"SONG.

"Within the chambers of her breast
Love lives and makes his spicy nest,

Midst downy blooms and fragrant flowers,
And there he dreams away the hours —
  There let him rest!
Some time hence, when the cuckoo sings,
I 'll come by night and bind his wings, —
Bind him that he shall not roam
From his warm white virgin home.

"Maiden of the summer season,
  Angel of the rosy time,
Come, unless some graver reason
  Bid thee scorn my rhyme;
Come from thy serener height,
On a golden cloud descending,
Come ere Love hath taken flight,
And let thy stay be like the light,
When its glory hath no ending
  In the Northern night!"

Now and then we get a glimpse of Thackeray in his letters. In one of them he says: —

"Thackeray came a few days ago and read one of his lectures at our house (that on George the Third), and we asked about a dozen persons to come and hear it, among the rest, your handsome countrywoman, Mrs. R—— S——. It was very pleasant, with that agreeable intermixture of tragedy and comedy that tells so well when judiciously managed. He will not print them for some time to come, intending to read them at some of the principal places in England, and perhaps Scotland.

"What are you doing in America? You are too happy and independent! 'O fortunatòs Agricolas, sua si bona nôrint!' I am not quite sure of my Latin (which is rusty from old age), but I am sure of the sentiment, which is that when people are too happy, they don't know it, and so take to quarrelling to relieve the monotony of their blue sky.

Some of these days you will split your great kingdom in two, I suppose, and then —

"My wife's mother, Mrs. Basil Montagu, is very ill, and we are apprehensive of a fatal result, which, in truth, the mere fact of her age (eighty-two or eighty-three) is enough to warrant. Ah, this terrible *age!* The young people, I dare say, think that we live too long. Yet how short it is to look back on life! Why, I saw the house the other day where I used to play with a wooden sword when I was five years old! It cannot surely be eighty years ago! What has occurred since? Why, nothing that is worth putting down on paper. A few nonsense verses, a flogging or two (richly deserved), and a few white-bait dinners, and the whole is reckoned up. Let us begin again." [Here he makes some big letters in a school-boy hand, which have a very pathetic look on the page.]

In a letter written in 1856 he gives me a graphic picture of sad times in India: —

"All our anxiety here at present is the Indian mutiny. We ourselves have great cause for trouble. Our son (the only son I have, indeed) escaped from Delhi lately. He is now at Meerut. He and four or five other officers, four women, and a child escaped. The men were obliged to drop the women a fearful height from the walls of the fort, amidst showers of bullets. A round shot passed within a yard of my son, and one of the ladies had a bullet through her shoulder. They were seven days and seven nights in the jungle, without money or meat, scarcely any clothes, no shoes. They forded rivers, lay on the wet ground at night, lapped water from the puddles, and finally reached Meerut. The lady (the mother of the three other ladies) had not her wound dressed, or seen, indeed, for upward of a week. Their feet were full of thorns. My son had nothing but a shirt, a pair of trousers, and a flannel waistcoat. How they contrived to *live* I don't know; I suppose from small gifts of rice, etc., from the natives.

"When I find any little thing now that disturbs my serenity, and which I might in former times have magnified into an evil, I think of what Europeans suffer from the vengeance of the Indians, and pass it by in quiet.

"I received Mr. Hillard's epitaph on my dear kind friend Kenyon. Thank him in my name for it. There are some copies to be reserved of a lithograph now in progress (a portrait of Kenyon) for his American friends. Should it be completed in time, Mr Sumner will be asked to take them over. I have put down your name for one of those who would wish to have this little memento of a good kind man. . . . .

"I shall never visit America, be assured, or the continent of Europe, or any distant region. I have reached nearly to the length of my tether. I have grown old and apathetic and stupid. All I care for, in the way of personal enjoyment, is quiet, ease, — to have nothing to do, nothing to think of. My only glance is backward. There is so little before me that I would rather not look that way."

In a later letter he again speaks of his son and the war in India: —

"My son is *not* in the list of killed and wounded, thank God! He was before Delhi, having *volunteered* thither after his escape. We trust that he is at present safe, but every mail is pregnant with bloody tidings, and we do not find ourselves yet in a position to rejoice securely. What a terrible war this Indian war is! Are all people of black blood cruel, cowardly, and treacherous? If it were a case of great oppression on our part, I could understand and (almost) excuse it; but it is from the *spoiled* portion of the Hindostanees that the revengeful mutiny has arisen. One thing is quite clear, that whatever luxury and refinement have done for our race (for I include Americans with English), they have not diminished the courage and endurance and heroism for which I think we have formerly been famous. We are the same Saxons still. There has never

been fiercer fighting than in some of the battles that have lately taken place in India. When I look back on the old history books, and see that *all* history consists of little else than the bloody feuds of nation with nation, I almost wonder that God has not extinguished the cruel, selfish animals that we dignify with the name of men. No — I cry forgiveness: let the women live, if they can, without the men. I used the word 'men' only."

Here is a pleasant paragraph about "Aurora Leigh": —

"The most successful book of the season has been Mrs. Browning's 'Aurora Leigh.' I could wish some things altered, I confess; but as it is, it is by far (a hundred times over) the finest poem ever written by a woman. We know little or nothing of Sappho, — nothing to induce comparison, — and all other wearers of petticoats must courtesy to the ground."

In several of his last letters to me there are frequent allusions to our civil war. Here is an extract from an epistle written in 1861: —

"We read with painful attention the accounts of your great quarrel in America. We know nothing beyond what we are told by the New York papers, and these are the stories of *one* of the combatants. I am afraid that, however you may mend the schism, you will never be so strong again. I hope, however, that something may arise to terminate the bloodshed; for, after all, fighting is an unsatisfactory way of coming at the truth. If you were to stand up at once (and finally) against the slave-trade, your band of soldiers would have a more decided *principle* to fight for. But —

"— But I really know little or nothing. I hope that at Boston you are comparatively peaceful, and I know that you are more abolitionist than in the more southern countries.

"There is nothing new doing here in the way of books.

The last book I have seen is called 'Tannhäuser,' published by Chapman and Hall, — a poem under feigned names, but *really* written by Robert Lytton and Julian Fane. It is not good enough for the first, but (as I conjecture) too good for the last. The songs which decide the contest of the bards are the worst portions of the book.

"I read some time ago a novel which has not made much noise, but which is prodigiously clever, — 'City and Suburb.' The story hangs in parts, but it is full of weighty sentences. We have no poet *since* Tennyson except Robert Lytton, who, you know, calls himself Owen Meredith. Poetry in England is assuming a new character, and not a better character. It has a sort of pre-Raphaelite tendency which does not suit my aged feelings. I am for Love, or the World well lost. But I forget that, if I live beyond the 21st of next November, I shall be *seventy-four* years of age. I have been obliged to resign my Commissionership of Lunacy, not being able to bear the pain of travelling. By this I lose about £900 a year. I am, therefore, sufficiently poor even for a poet. Browning, as you know, has lost his wife. He is coming with his little boy to live in England. I rejoice at this, for I think that the English should live in England, especially in their youth, when people learn things that they never forget afterward."

Near the close of 1864 he writes: —

"Since I last heard from you, nothing except what is melancholy seems to have taken place. You seem all busy killing each other in America. Some friends of yours and several friends of mine have died. Among the last I cannot help placing Nathaniel Hawthorne, for whom I had a sincere regard. . . . . He was about your best prose writer, I think, and intermingled with his humor was a great deal of tenderness. To die so soon!

"You are so easily affronted in America, if we (English) say anything about putting an end to your war, that I will not venture to hint at the subject. Nevertheless, I wish

that you were all at peace again, for your own sakes and for the sake of human nature. I detest fighting now, although I was a great admirer of fighting in my youth. My youth? I wonder where it has gone. It has left me with gray hairs and rheumatism, and plenty of (too many other) infirmities. I stagger and stumble along, with almost seventy-six years on my head, upon failing limbs, which no longer enable me to walk half a mile. I see a great deal, all behind me (the Past), but the prospect before me is not cheerful. Sometimes I wish that I had tried harder for what is called Fame, but generally (as now) I care very little about it. After all, — unless one could be Shakespeare, which (clearly) is not an easy matter, — of what value is a little puff of smoke from a review? If we could settle permanently who is to be the Homer or Shakespeare of our time, it might be worth something; but we cannot. Is it Jones, or Smith, or ——? Alas! I get short-sighted on this point, and cannot penetrate the impenetrable dark. Make my remembrances acceptable to Longfellow, to Lowell, to Emerson, and to any one else who remembers me.

"Yours, ever sincerely,

"B. W. Procter."

And here are a few paragraphs from the last letter I ever received from Procter's loving hand: —

"Although I date this from Weymouth Street, yet I am writing 140 or 150 miles away from London. Perhaps this temporary retreat from our great, noisy, turbulent city reminds me that I have been very unmindful of your letter, received long ago. But I have been busy, and my writing now is not a simple matter, as it was fifty years ago. I have great difficulty in forming the letters, and you would be surprised to learn with what labor *this* task is performed. Then I have been incessantly occupied in writing (I refer to the *mechanical* part only) the 'Memoir of Charles Lamb.' It is not my book, — i. e. not my property, — but one which I

was hired to write, and it forms my last earnings. You will have heard of the book (perhaps seen it) some time since. It has been very well received. I would not have engaged myself on anything else, but I had great regard for Charles Lamb, and so (somehow or other) I have contrived to reach the end.

"I *have* already (long ago) written something about Hazlitt, but I have received more than one application for it, in case I can manage to complete my essay. As in the case of Lamb, I am really the only person living who knew much about his daily life. I have not, however, quite the same incentive to carry me on. Indeed, I am not certain that I should be able to travel to the real Finis.

"My wife is very grateful for the copies of my dear Adelaide's poems which you sent her. She appears surprised to hear that I have not transmitted her thanks to you before.

"We get the 'Atlantic Monthly' regularly. I need not tell you how much better the poetry is than at its commencement. Very good is 'Released,' in the July number, and several of the stories; but they are in London, and I cannot particularize them.

"We were very much pleased with Colonel Holmes, the son of your friend and contributor. He seems a very intelligent, modest young man; as little military as need be, and, like Coriolanus, not baring his wounds (if he has any) for public gaze. When you see Dr. Holmes, pray tell him how much I and my wife liked his son.

"We are at the present moment rusticating at Malvern Wells. We are on the side of a great hill (which you would call small in America), and our intercourse is only with the flowers and bees and swallows of the season. Sometimes we encounter a wasp, which I suppose comes from over seas!

"The Storys are living two or three miles off, and called upon us a few days ago. You have not seen *his* Sibyl, which I think very fine, and as containing a *very great* future. But

the young poets generally disappoint us, and are too content with startling us into admiration of their first works, and then go to sleep.

"I wish that I had, when younger, made more notes about my contemporaries; for, being of no faction in politics, it happens that I have known far more literary men than any other person of my time. In counting up the names of persons known to me who were, in some way or other, *connected* with literature, I reckoned up more than one hundred. But then I have had more than sixty years to do this in. My first acquaintance of this sort was Bowles, the poet. This was about 1805.

"Although I can scarcely write, I am able to say, in conclusion, that I am

"Very sincerely yours,

"B. W. Procter."

Procter was an ardent student of the works of our older English dramatists, and he had a special fondness for such writers as Decker, Marlowe, Heywood, Webster, and Fletcher. Many of his own dramatic scenes are modelled on that passionate and romantic school. He had great relish for a good modern novel, too; and I recall the titles of several which he recommended warmly for my perusal and republication in America. When I first came to know him, the duties of his office as a Commissioner obliged him to travel about the kingdom, sometimes on long journeys, and he told me his pocket companion was a cheap reprint of Emerson's "Essays," which he found such agreeable reading that he never left home without it. Longfellow's "Hyperion" was another of his favorite books during the years he was on duty.

Among the last agreeable visits I made to the old poet was one with reference to a proposition of his own to omit several songs and other short poems from a new issue of his works then in press. I stoutly opposed the ignoring of certain old favorites of mine, and the poet's wife joined with me in deciding against the author in his proposal to cast aside so many beautiful songs, — songs as well worth saving as any in the volume. Procter argued that, being past seventy, he had now reached to years of discretion, and that his judgment ought to be followed without a murmur. I held out firm to the end of our discussion, and we settled the matter with this compromise: he was to expunge whatever he chose from the English edition, but I was to have my own way with the American one. So to this day the American reprint is the only complete collection of Barry Cornwall's earliest pieces, for I held on to all the old lyrics, without discarding a single line.

The poet's figure was short and full, and his voice had a low, veiled tone habitually in it, which made it sometimes difficult to hear distinctly what he was saying. When in conversation, he liked to be very near his listener, and thus stand, as it were, on confidential ground with him. His turn of thought was cheerful among his friends, and he proceeded readily into a vein of wit and nimble

expression. Verbal felicity seemed natural to him, and his epithets, evidently unprepared, were always perfect. He disliked cant and hard ways of judging character. He praised easily. He had no wish to stand in anybody's shoes but his own, and he said, "There is no literary vice of a darker shade than envy." Talleyrand's recipe for perfect happiness was the opposite to his. He impressed every one who came near him as a born gentleman, chivalrous and generous in a marked degree, and it was the habit of those who knew him to have an affection for him. Altering a line of Pope, this counsel might have been safely tendered to all the authors of his day, —

"Disdain whatever *Procter's mind* disdains."

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

STAVE ONE.

MARLEY'S GHOST.

MARLEY was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to.

Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done

for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnized it with an undoubted bargain.

The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot, — say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance, — literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people

new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and did n't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather did n't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say,

with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time — of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve — old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement-stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already, — it had not been light all day, — and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighboring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so

dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he could n't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," returned the nephew, gayly. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Scrooge, having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug."

"Don't be cross, uncle!" said the nephew.

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge, indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Nephew!" returned the uncle, sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew, "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, — apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that, — as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark forever.

"Let me hear another sound from *you*," said Scrooge, "and you 'll keep your Christmas by losing

your situation! You 're quite a powerful speaker, sir," he added, turning to his nephew. "I wonder you don't go into Parliament."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow."

Scrooge said that he would see him — yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

"But why?" cried Scrooge's nephew. "Why?"

"Why did you get married?" said Scrooge.

"Because I fell in love."

"Because you fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. "Good afternoon!"

"Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?"

"Good afternoon," said Scrooge.

"I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I 'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

"And A Happy New Year!"

"Good afternoon!" said Scrooge.

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially.

"There 's another fellow," muttered Scrooge, who overheard him: "my clerk, with fifteen shillings a-week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I 'll retire to Bedlam."

This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

"Scrooge and Marley's, I believe," said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?"

"Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years," Scrooge replied. "He died seven years ago, this very night."

"We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality," Scrooge

frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish *I* could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigor, then?" said Scrooge.

"Both very busy, sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I 'm very glad to hear it."

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want

is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned — they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there."

"Many can't go there; and many would rather die."

"If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides — excuse me — I don't know that."

"But you might know it," observed the gentleman.

"It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labors with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so,

that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards, as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some laborers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowings sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and blood-

thirsty in the streets, stirred up to-morrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder! Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of

> "God bless you merry gentleman!
> May nothing you dismay!"

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose," said Scrooge.

"If quite convenient, sir."

"It's not convenient," said Scrooge, "and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?"

The clerk smiled faintly.

"And yet," said Scrooge, "you don't think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work."

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning."

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honor of its being Christmas eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's-buff.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and have forgotten the way out again. It

was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London, even including — which is a bold word — the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-years-dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change — not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at

Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot-air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid color, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He *did* pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he *did* look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said, "Pooh, pooh!" and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fas-

tened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs; slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinter-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half a dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn't have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge's dip.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge had a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumber-

room as usual. Old fire-guard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts; and yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room.

After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It 's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it!"

His color changed, though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though

it cried, "I know him! Marley's Ghost!" and fell again.

The same face! the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

"How now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!" — Marley's voice, no doubt about it.

"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I *was*."

"Who *were* you, then?" said Scrooge, raising his voice. "You 're particular, for a shade." He was going to say, "*to* a shade," but substituted this, as more appropriate.

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you — can you sit down?" asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.

"I can."

"Do it, then."

Scrooge asked the question, because he did n't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost.

"I don't," said Scrooge.

"What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?"

"I don't know," said Scrooge.

"Why do you doubt your senses?"

"Because," said Scrooge, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There 's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking

jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror: for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels were still agitated as by the hot vapor from an oven.

"You see this toothpick?" said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

"I do," replied the Ghost.

"You are not looking at it," said Scrooge.

"But I see it," said the Ghost, "notwithstanding."

"Well!" returned Scrooge, "I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you; humbug!"

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise,

that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear in-doors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast!

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy!" he said. "Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind!" replied the Ghost, "do you believe in me or not?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

"It is required of every man," the Ghost returned, "that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world — O, woe is me! — and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!"

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard;

I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to *you?*"

Scrooge trembled more and more.

"Or would you know," pursued the Ghost, "the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!"

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

"Jacob," he said, imploringly. "Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!"

"I have none to give," the Ghost replied. "It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more, is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house — mark me! — in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches-pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

"You must have been very slow about it, Jacob," Scrooge observed in a business-like manner, though with humility and deference.

"Slow!" the Ghost repeated.

"Seven years dead," mused Scrooge. "And travelling all the time?"

"The whole time," said the Ghost. "No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse."

"You travel fast?" said Scrooge.

"On the wings of the wind," replied the Ghost.

"You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years," said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

"Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed," cried the phantom, "not to know, that ages of incessant labor, by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!"

"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob," faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

"Business!" cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

It held up its chain at arm's length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

"At this time of the rolling year," the spectre said, "I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted *me!*"

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

"Hear me!" cried the Ghost. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will," said Scrooge. "But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!"

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day."

It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"That is no light part of my penance," pursued the Ghost. "I am here to-night to warn you, that

you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer."

"You were always a good friend to me," said Scrooge. "Thank 'ee!"

"You will be haunted," resumed the Ghost, "by Three Spirits."

Scrooge's countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost's had done.

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?" he demanded, in a faltering voice.

"It is."

"I — I think I 'd rather not," said Scrooge.

"Without their visits," said the Ghost, "you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One."

"Could n't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?" hinted Scrooge.

"Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!"

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm.

The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open. It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley's Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window, desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought

to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power forever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose, went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

STAVE TWO.

THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS.

WHEN Scrooge awoke, it was so dark, that looking out of bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavoring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the

chimes of a neighboring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour.

To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve!

He touched the spring of his repeater, to correct this most preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twelve; and stopped.

"Why, it is n't possible," said Scrooge, "that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It is n't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!"

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of people running to and fro, and making a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world. This was a great relief, because "three days after sight of this First of Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge or his order," and so forth, would have

become a mere United States security if there were no days to count by.

Scrooge went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and over and over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and the more he endeavored not to think, the more he thought.

Marley's Ghost bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved within himself, after mature inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back again, like a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, "Was it a dream or not?"

Scrooge lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven, this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power.

The quarter was so long, that he was more than once convinced he must have sunk into a doze unconsciously, and missed the clock. At length it broke upon his listening ear.

"Ding, dong!"

"A quarter past," said Scrooge, counting.

"Ding, dong!"

"Half past!" said Scrooge.

"Ding, dong!"

"A quarter to it," said Scrooge.

"Ding, dong!"

"The hour itself," said Scrooge, triumphantly, "and nothing else!"

He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn.

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

It was a strange figure — like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most del-

icately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was *not* its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs; now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever.

"Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?" asked Scrooge.

"I am!"

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

"Who, and what are you?" Scrooge demanded.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."

"Long Past?" inquired Scrooge, observant of its dwarfish stature.

"No. Your past."

Perhaps Scrooge could not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap, and begged him to be covered.

"What!" exclaimed the Ghost, "would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow!"

Scrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any knowledge of having wilfully "bonneted" the Spirit at any period of his life. He then made bold to inquire what business brought him there.

"Your welfare!" said the Ghost.

Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately:

"Your reclamation, then. Take heed!"

It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

"Rise! and walk with me!"

It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped its robe in supplication.

"I am a mortal," Scrooge remonstrated, "and liable to fall."

"Bear but a touch of my hand *there*," said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, "and you shall be upheld in more than this!"

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.

"Good Heaven!" said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. "I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!"

The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odors floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long forgotten!

"Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost. "And what is that upon your cheek?"

Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit.

"Remember it!" cried Scrooge with fervor; "I could walk it blindfold."

"Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!" observed the Ghost. "Let us go on."

They walked along the road, Scrooge recognizing every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it.

"These are but shadows of the things that have

been," said the Ghost. "They have no consciousness of us."

The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them? Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past? Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and by-ways, for their several homes? What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were overrun with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms,

they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savor in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candlelight, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he had used to be.

Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty storehouse door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading. Suddenly a man, in foreign garments, wonderfully real and distinct to look at, stood outside the window, with an axe stuck in his belt, and leading by the bridle an ass laden with wood.

"Why, it 's Ali Baba!" Scrooge exclaimed in ecstasy. "It 's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I

know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he *did* come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And Valentine," said Scrooge, "and his wild brother, Orson; there they go! And what 's his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don't you see him! And the Sultan's Groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Serve him right. I 'm glad of it. What business had *he* to be married to the Princess!"

To hear Scrooge expending all the earnestness of his nature on such subjects, in a most extraordinary voice between laughing and crying, and to see his heightened and excited face, would have been a surprise to his business friends in the city, indeed.

"There 's the Parrot!" cried Scrooge. "Green body and yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe, he called him, when he came home again after sailing round the island. 'Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe?' The man thought he was dreaming, but he was n't. It was the Parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloa! Hoop! Halloo!"

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character, he said, in pity for his former self, "Poor boy!" and cried again.

"I wish," Scrooge muttered, putting his hand

in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff: "but it 's too late now."

"What is the matter?" asked the Spirit.

"Nothing," said Scrooge, — "nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that 's all."

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand, saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!"

Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. The panels shrunk, the windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell out of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead; but how all this was brought about, Scrooge knew no more than you do. He only knew that it was quite correct; that everything had happened so; that there he was, alone again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays.

He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother."

"I have come to bring you home, dear brother!"

said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!"

"Home, little Fan?" returned the boy.

"Yes!" said the child, brimful of glee. "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you 're to be a man!" said the child, opening her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we 're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world."

"You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loath to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried, "Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!" and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking

hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlor that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of "something" to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. Master Scrooge's trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the children bade the schoolmaster good by right willingly; and getting into it, drove gayly down the garden-sweep: the quick wheels dashing the hoar-frost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray.

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

"So she had," cried Scrooge. "You 're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!"

"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think, children."

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

"Know it!" said Scrooge. "Was I apprenticed here!"

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welch wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement:

"Why, it 's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it 's Fezziwig alive again!"

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:

"Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!"

Scrooge's former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-'prentice.

"Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said Scrooge to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!"

"Yo ho, my boys!" said Fezziwig. "No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let 's have the shutters up," cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, "before a man can say Jack Robinson!"

You would n't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters — one, two, three — had 'em up in their places — four, five, six — barred 'em and pinned 'em — seven, eight, nine — and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

"Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let 's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!"

Clear away! There was nothing they would n't have cleared away, or could n't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life forevermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them! When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, "Well done!" and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided for that

purpose. But scorning rest upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter, and he were a bran-new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley." Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who *would* dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many — ah, four times — old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to *her*, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that 's not high praise, tell me higher, and I 'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You could n't have pre-

dicted, at any given time, what would become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and courtesy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut" — cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig; and when he had done so, said:

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

"It is n't that," said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self, — "it is n't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

"Nothing particular," said Scrooge.

"Something, I think?" the Ghost insisted.

"No," said Scrooge, — "no. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That 's all."

His former self turned down the lamps as he gave utterance to the wish; and Scrooge and the Ghost again stood side by side in the open air.

"My time grows short," observed the Spirit. "Quick!"

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress, in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

"It matters little," she said, softly. "To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve."

"What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined.

"A golden one."

"This is the even-handed dealing of the world!" he said. "There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!"

"You fear the world too much," she answered,

gently. "All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?"

"What then?" he retorted. "Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you."

She shook her head.

"Am I?"

"Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man."

"I was a boy," he said impatiently.

"Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are," she returned. "I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I *have* thought of it, and can release you."

"Have I ever sought release?"

"In words. No. Never."

"In what, then?"

"In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of

any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us," said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him, "tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!"

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said, with a struggle, "You think not."

"I would gladly think otherwise if I could," she answered, "Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl, — you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were."

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed:

"You may — the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will — have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!"

She left him, and they parted.

"Spirit!" said Scrooge, "show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?"

"One shadow more!" exclaimed the Ghost.

"No more!" cried Scrooge, — "no more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!"

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw *her*, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count; and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much; and the latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got pillaged by the young brigands most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to be one of them! Though I never could have been

so rude, no, no! I would n't for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I would n't have plucked it off, God bless my soul! to save my life. As to measuring her waist in sport, as they did, bold young brood, I could n't have done it; I should have expected my arm to have grown round it for a punishment, and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked, I own, to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price: in short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest license of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.

But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and plundered dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group, just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! The scaling him, with chairs for ladders, to dive into his pockets, despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round his

neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received! The terrible announcement that the baby had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter! The immense relief of finding this a false alarm! The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy! They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlor and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so subsided.

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon."

"Who was it?"

"Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know?" she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "Mr. Scrooge."

"Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe."

"Spirit!" said Scrooge, in a broken voice, "remove me from this place."

"I told you these were shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "That they are what they are, do not blame me!"

"Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed. "I cannot bear it!"

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

"Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!"

In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge

pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light, which streamed from under it in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

STAVE THREE.

THE SECOND OF THE THREE SPIRITS.

AWAKING in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention. But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands, and lying down again, established a sharp lookout all round the bed. For he wished to challenge the

Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous.

Gentlemen of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and being usually equal to the time of day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion, without having the con-

solation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think, — as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too, — at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrifaction of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies,

plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

"Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost, — "come in! and know me better, man!"

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me!"

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple deep green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanor, and its joyful

air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

"You have never seen the like of me before!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Never," Scrooge made answer to it.

"Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?" pursued the Phantom.

"I don't think I have," said Scrooge. "I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?"

"More than eighteen hundred," said the Ghost.

"A tremendous family to provide for!" muttered Scrooge.

The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

"Spirit," said Scrooge, submissively, "conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it."

"Touch my robe!"

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they stood in the city streets

on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses, whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snow-storms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground; which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy wheels of carts and wagons; furrows that crossed and re-crossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off; and made intricate channels, hard to trace in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in a shower of sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear hearts' content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavored to diffuse in vain.

For the people who were shovelling away on the

house-tops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball, — better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest, — laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence, to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very

gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The Grocers'! O, the Grocers'! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch

them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humor possible; while the Grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at, if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of by-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good-humor was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their

cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

"Is there a peculiar flavor in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked Scrooge.

"There is. My own."

"Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?" asked Scrooge.

"To any kindly given. To a poor one most."

"Why to a poor one most?" asked Scrooge.

"Because it needs it most."

"Spirit," said Scrooge, after a moment's thought, "I wonder you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment."

"I!" cried the Spirit.

"You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day, often the only day on which they can be said to dine at all," said Scrooge. "Would n't you?"

"I!" cried the Spirit.

"You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day," said Scrooge. "And it comes to the same thing."

"I seek!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Forgive me if I am wrong. It has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family," said Scrooge.

"There are some upon this earth of yours," re-

turned the Spirit, "who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us."

Scrooge promised that he would; and they went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost, which Scrooge had observed at the baker's, that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as it was possible he could have done in any lofty hall.

And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinklings of his torch. Think of that! Bob had but fifteen "Bob" a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!

Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife,

dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt-collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honor of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes, bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father then?" said Mrs. Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half an hour!"

"Here 's Martha, mother," said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

"Here 's Martha, mother!" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There 's *such* a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We 'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother!"

"Well! Never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!"

"No, no! There 's father coming," cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha, hide!"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter, exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

"Why, where 's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

"Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming!" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha did n't like to see him disappointed, if it

were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see."

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool beside the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs, — as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby, — compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer, Master Peter and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went

to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course, — and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long-expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he did n't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavor, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-

sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family ; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small ătom of a bone upon the dish), they had n't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone — too nervous to bear witnesses — to take the pudding up, and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose, — a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered — flushed, but smiling proudly — with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

O, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their mar-

riage. Mrs. Cratchit said that, now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovelful of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one ; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass, — two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed :

" A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us ! "

Which all the family re-echoed.

" God bless us every one ! " said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side, upon his

little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."

"No, no," said Scrooge. "O, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared."

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population."

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

"Man," said the Ghost, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. O God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!"

Scrooge bent before the Ghost's rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

"Mr. Scrooge!" said Bob; "I 'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!"

"The Founder of the Feast indeed!" cried Mrs. Cratchit, reddening. "I wish I had him here. I 'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he 'd have a good appetite for it."

"My dear," said Bob, "the children! Christmas Day."

"It should be Christmas Day, I am sure," said she, "on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!"

"My dear," was Bob's mild answer, "Christmas Day."

"I 'll drink his health for your sake, and the Day's," said Mrs. Cratchit, "not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year! He 'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!"

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness in it. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he did n't care twopence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of Scrooge the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter's being a man of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at the fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favor when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord "was much about as tall as Peter"; at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you could n't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went round and round; and by and by they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed: their shoes were far from being water-

proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

By this time it was getting dark, and snowing pretty heavily; and as Scrooge and the Spirit went along the streets, the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlors, and all sorts of rooms was wonderful. Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosey dinner, with hot plates baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out cold and darkness. There, all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and furbooted, and all chattering at once, tripped lightly off to some near neighbor's house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter — artful witches, well they knew it — in a glow.

But, if you had judged from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give

them welcome when they got there, instead of every house expecting company, and piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings on it, how the Ghost exulted! How it bared its breadth of breast, and opened its capacious palm, and floated on, outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth on everything within its reach! The very lamplighter, who ran on before, dotting the dusky street with specks of light, and who was dressed to spend the evening somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed, though little kenned the lamplighter that he had any company but Christmas!

And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed, or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse, rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night.

"What place is this?" asked Scrooge.

"A place where Miners live, who labor in the bowels of the earth," returned the Spirit. "But they know me. See!"

A light shone from the window of a hut, and

swiftly they advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of mud and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children's children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gayly in their holiday attire. The old man, in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them a Christmas song, — it had been a very old song when he was a boy, — and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigor sank again.

The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade Scrooge hold his robe, and passing on above the moor, sped — whither? Not to sea? To sea. To Scrooge's horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, behind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering of water, as it rolled, and roared, and raged among the dreadful caverns it had worn, and fiercely tried to undermine the earth.

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse. Great heaps of sea-weed clung to its base, and storm-birds — born of the wind one might suppose, as sea-weed of the water — rose and fell about it, like the waves they skimmed.

But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their horny hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog; and one of them, the elder, too, with his face all damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old ship might be, struck up a sturdy song that was like a Gale in itself.

Again the Ghost sped on, above the black and heaving sea, — on, on, — until, being far away, as he told Scrooge, from any shore, they lighted on a ship. They stood beside the helmsman at the wheel, the lookout in the bow, the officers who had the watch; dark, ghostly figures in their several stations; but every man among them hummed a Christmas tune, or had a Christmas thought, or spoke below his breath to his companion of some bygone Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging to it. And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year; and had shared to some extent in its festivities; and had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him.

It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what

a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as profound as Death, — it was a great surprise to Scrooge, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh. It was a much greater surprise to Scrooge to recognize it as his own nephew's, and to find himself in a bright, dry, gleaming room, with the Spirit standing smiling by his side, and looking at that same nephew with approving affability!

"Ha, ha!" laughed Scrooge's nephew. "Ha, ha, ha!"

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge's nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance.

It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humor. When Scrooge's nephew laughed in this way, holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions, Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends, being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily.

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I

live!" cried Scrooge's nephew. "He believed it, too!"

"More shame for him, Fred!" said Scrooge's niece, indignantly. Bless those women! they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest.

She was very pretty: exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed, — as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory, too. O, perfectly satisfactory!

"He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "that's the truth; and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him."

"I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece. "At least you always tell *me* so."

"What of that, my dear?" said Scrooge's nephew. "His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking — ha, ha, ha! — that he is ever going to benefit Us with it."

"I have no patience with him," observed Scrooge's niece. Scrooge's niece's sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion.

"O, I have!" said Scrooge's nephew. "I am sorry for him: I could n't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What 's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner."

"Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner," interrupted Scrooge's niece. Everybody else said the same, and they must be allowed to have been competent judges, because they had just had dinner; and, with the dessert upon the table, were clustered round the fire, by lamplight.

"Well! I am very glad to hear it," said Scrooge's nephew, "because I have n't any great faith in these young housekeepers. What do *you* say, Topper?"

Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of Scrooge's niece's sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject. Whereat Scrooge's niece's sister — the plump one with the lace tucker, not the one with the roses — blushed.

"Do go on, Fred," said Scrooge's niece, clapping her hands. "He never finishes what he begins to say! He is such a ridiculous fellow!"

Scrooge's nephew revelled in another laugh, and

as it was impossible to keep the infection off, though the plump sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar, his example was unanimously followed.

"I was only going to say," said Scrooge's nephew, "that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it — I defy him — if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying, Uncle Scrooge, how are you? If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, *that*'s something; and I think I shook him, yesterday."

It was their turn to laugh now, at the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle, joyously.

After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or Catch, I can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in

his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge's niece played well upon the harp; and played among other tunes a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes) which had been familiar to the child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton's spade that buried Jacob Marley.

But they did n't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blind-man's-buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and Scrooge's nephew; and that the Ghost of Christmas Present knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping up against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains,

wherever she went, there went he! He always knew where the plump sister was. He would n't catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him (as some of them did) on purpose, he would have made a feint of endeavoring to seize you, which would have been an affront to your understanding, and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of the plump sister. She often cried out that it was n't fair; and it really was not. But when, at last, he caught her; when, in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape, then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was necessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck, was vile, monstrous! No doubt she told him her opinion of it, when, another blind-man being in office, they were so very confidential together, behind the curtains.

Scrooge's niece was not one of the blind-man's-buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and, to the secret joy of Scrooge's neph-

ew, beat her sisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as Topper could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge; for, wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed right, too; for the sharpest needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye, was not sharper than Scrooge; blunt as he took it in his head to be.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favor, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

"Here is a new game," said Scrooge. "One half-hour, Spirit, only one!"

It was a game called Yes and No, where Scrooge's nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and was n't made a show of, and was n't led by anybody, and did n't live in

a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out:

"I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!"

"What is it?" cried Fred.

"It 's your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!"

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to "Is it a bear?" ought to have been "Yes"; inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from Mr. Scrooge, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

"He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure," said Fred, "and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, 'Uncle Scrooge!'"

"Well! Uncle Scrooge!" they cried.

"A Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!" said Scrooge's nephew. "He would n't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!"

Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick-beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door, and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was gray.

"Are spirits' lives so short?" asked Scrooge.

"My life upon this globe is very brief," replied the Ghost. "It ends to-night."

"To-night!" cried Scrooge.

"To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near."

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

"Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?"

"It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look here."

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

"O Man! look here. Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing.

No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

"Spirit! are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more.

"They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And bide the end!"

"Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge.

"Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?"

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he

remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

STAVE FOUR.

THE LAST OF THE SPIRITS.

THE Phantom slowly, gravely, silently, approached. When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee ; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

"I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come ?" said Scrooge.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

"You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us," Scrooge pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?"

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit paused a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover.

But Scrooge was all the worse for this. It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that, behind the dusky shroud, there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black.

"Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?"

It gave him no reply. The hand was pointed straight before them.

"Lead on!" said Scrooge, — "lead on! The

night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit!"

The Phantom moved away as it had come towards him. Scrooge followed in the shadow of its dress, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along.

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them of its own act. But there they were, in the heart of it; on 'Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals, and so forth, as Scrooge had seen them often.

The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, Scrooge advanced to listen to their talk.

"No," said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, "I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he 's dead."

"When did he die?" inquired another.

"Last night, I believe."

"Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. "I thought he 'd never die."

"God knows," said the first, with a yawn.

"What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence

on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

"I have n't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again. "Left it to his company, perhaps. He has n't left it to *me*. That 's all I know."

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

"It 's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?"

"I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one."

Another laugh.

"Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all," said the first speaker, "for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I 'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I 'm not at all sure that I was n't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. By, by!"

Speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups. Scrooge knew the men, and looked towards the Spirit for an explanation.

The Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. Scrooge listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here.

He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were

men of business: very wealthy, and of great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view.

"How are you?" said one.

"How are you?" returned the other.

"Well!" said the first. "Old Scratch has got his own at last, hey?"

"So I am told," returned the second. "Cold, is n't it!"

"Seasonable for Christmas time. You 're not a skater, I suppose?"

"No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning!"

Not another word. That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting.

Scrooge was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what it was likely to be. They could scarcely be supposed to have any bearing on the death of Jacob, his old partner, for that was Past, and this Ghost's province was the Future. Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he

heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clew he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy.

He looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch. It gave him little surprise, however; for he had been revolving in his mind a change of life, and thought and hoped he saw his new-born resolutions carried out in this.

Quiet and dark, beside him stood the Phantom, with its outstretched hand. When he roused himself from his thoughtful quest, he fancied from the turn of the hand, and its situation in reference to himself, that the Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and feel very cold.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognized its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the strag-

gling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth and misery.

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a penthouse roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal were bought. Upon the floor within were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinize were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a gray-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without by a frowzy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line, and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.

Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh.

"Let the charwoman alone to be the first!" cried she who had entered first. "Let the laun-

dress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker's man alone to be the third. Look here, old Joe, here 's a chance! If we have n't all three met here without meaning it!"

"You could n't have met in a better place," said old Joe, removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come into the parlor. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two an't strangers. Stop till I shut the door of the shop. Ah! How it skreeks! There an't such a rusty bit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; and I 'm sure there 's no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, ha! We 're all suitable to our calling, we 're well matched. Come into the parlor. Come into the parlor."

The parlor was the space behind the screen of rags. The old man raked the fire together with an old stair-rod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night) with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again.

While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

"What odds then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber?" said the woman. "Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did!"

"That 's true, indeed!" said the laundress. "No man more so."

"Why then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who 's the wiser? We 're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?"

"No, indeed!" said Mrs. Dilber and the man together. "We should hope not."

"Very well, then!" cried the woman. "That 's enough. Who 's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose."

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Dilber, laughing.

"If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw," pursued the woman, "why was n't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he 'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself."

"It 's the truest word that ever was spoke," said Mrs. Dilber. "It 's a judgment on him."

"I wish it was a little heavier judgment," replied the woman; "and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I 'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We knew pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It 's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe."

But the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the

breach first, produced *his* plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. They were severally examined and appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was disposed to give for each upon the wall, and added them up into a total when he found that there was nothing more to come.

"That 's your account," said Joe, "and I would n't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who 's next?"

Mrs. Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing-apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots. Her account was stated on the wall in the same manner.

"I always give too much to ladies. It 's a weakness of mine, and that 's the way I ruin myself," said old Joe. "That 's your account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I 'd repent of being so liberal, and knock off half a crown."

"And now undo *my* bundle, Joe," said the first woman.

Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff.

"What do you call this?" said Joe. "Bed-curtains!"

"Ah!" returned the woman, laughing and leaning forward on her crossed arms. "Bed-curtains!"

"You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?" said Joe.

"Yes, I do," replied the woman. "Why not?"

"You were born to make your fortune," said Joe, "and you 'll certainly do it."

"I certainly sha' n't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as He was, I promise you, Joe," returned the woman coolly. "Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now."

"His blankets?" asked Joe.

"Whose else's do you think?" replied the woman. "He is n't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say."

"I hope he did n't die of anything catching? Eh?" said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

"Don't you be afraid of that," returned the woman. "I an't so fond of his company that I 'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah! You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It 's the best he had, and a fine one too. They 'd have wasted it, if it had n't been for me."

"What do you call wasting of it?" asked old Joe.

"Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure,"

replied the woman with a laugh. "Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico an't good enough for such a purpose, it is n't good enough for anything. It 's quite as becoming to the body. He can't look uglier than he did in that one."

Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded by the old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust which could hardly have been greater, though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the same woman, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it, told out their several gains upon the ground. "This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Spirit!" said Scrooge, shuddering from head to foot. "I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven, what is this!"

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed, — a bare, uncurtained bed, on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.

The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though Scrooge glanced round it

in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Scrooge's part, would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it, but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side.

O cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command; for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honored head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still: but that the hand WAS open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal!

No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised

up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child to say he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. What *they* wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think.

"Spirit!" he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!"

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

"I understand you," Scrooge returned, "and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power."

Again it seemed to look upon him.

"If there is any person in the town who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said Scrooge, quite agonized, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!"

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were.

She was expecting some one, and with anxious

eagerness: for she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play.

At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a man whose face was careworn and depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress.

He sat down to the dinner that had been hoarding for him by the fire; and when she asked him faintly what news (which was not until after a long silence), he appeared embarrassed how to answer.

"Is it good," she said, "or bad?"—to help him.

"Bad," he answered.

"We are quite ruined?"

"No. There is hope yet, Caroline."

"If *he* relents," she said, amazed, "there is! Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened."

"He is past relenting," said her husband. "He is dead."

She was a mild and patient creature if her face spoke truth; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she said so, with clasped hands. She

prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion of her heart.

"What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay, and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me, turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then."

"To whom will our debt be transferred?"

"I don't know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline!"

Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The children's faces, hushed and clustered round to hear what they so little understood, were brighter; and it was a happier house for this man's death! The only emotion that the Ghost could show him, caused by the event, was one of pleasure.

"Let me see some tenderness connected with a death," said Scrooge, "or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be forever present to me."

The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit's house, — the dwelling he had visited before, —

and found the mother and the children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet!

"'And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.'"

Where had Scrooge heard those words? He had not dreamed them. The boy must have read them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face.

"The color hurts my eyes," she said.

The color? Ah, poor Tiny Tim!

"They 're better now again," said Cratchit's wife. "It makes them weak by candlelight; and I would n't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time."

"Past it rather," Peter answered, shutting up his book. "But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother."

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

"I have known him walk with — I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder very fast indeed."

"And so have I," cried Peter. "Often."

"And so have I," exclaimed another. So had all.

"But he was very light to carry," she resumed, intent upon her work, "and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble, — no trouble. And there is your father at the door!"

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter — he had need of it, poor fellow — came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child, a little cheek against his face, as if they said, "Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved!"

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs. Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

"Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife.

"Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you 'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on

a Sunday. My little, little child!" cried Bob, — "my little child!"

He broke down all at once. He could n't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy.

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still. Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little — "just a little down, you know," said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. "On which," said Bob, "for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. 'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,' he said, 'and heartily sorry for your good wife.' By the by, how he ever knew *that*, I don't know."

"Knew what, my dear?"

"Why, that you were a good wife," replied Bob.

"Everybody knows that!" said Peter.

"Very well observed, my boy!" cried Bob. "I hope they do. 'Heartily sorry,' he said, 'for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,' he said, giving me his card, 'that 's where I live. Pray come to me.' Now it was n't," cried Bob, "for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us."

"I 'm sure he 's a good soul!" said Mrs. Cratchit.

"You would be surer of it, my dear," returned Bob, "if you saw and spoke to him. I should n't be at all surprised — mark what I say! — if he got Peter a better situation."

"Only hear that, Peter," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"And then," cried one of the girls, "Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself."

"Get along with you!" retorted Peter, grinning.

"It 's just as likely as not," said Bob, "one of these days; though there 's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim — shall we? — or this first parting that there was among us?"

"Never, father!" cried they all.

"And I know," said Bob, — "I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild

he was, although he was a little, little child, we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it."

"No, never, father!" they all cried again.

"I am very happy," said little Bob, — "I am very happy!"

Mrs. Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

"Spectre," said Scrooge, "something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead."

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before — though at a different time, he thought; indeed, there seemed no order in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future — into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by Scrooge to tarry for a moment.

"This court," said Scrooge, "through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!"

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

"The house is yonder," Scrooge exclaimed. "Why do you point away?"

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before.

He joined it once again, and wondering why and whither he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place.

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

"Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point," said Scrooge, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be, only?"

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!"

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.

"Am *I* that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

"No, Spirit! O, no, no!"

The finger still was there.

"Spirit!" he cried, tight clutching at its robe, "hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?"

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

"Good Spirit," he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it, "your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!"

The kind hand trembled.

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. O, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

STAVE FIVE.

THE END OF IT.

YES! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

"I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!" Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. "The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Old Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christ-

mas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!"

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

"They are not torn down," cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, — "they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here — I am here — the shadows of the things that would have been may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!"

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

"I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there, perfectly winded.

"There 's the saucepan that the gruel was in!" cried Scrooge, starting off again, and going round

the fireplace. "There 's the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There 's the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present sat. There 's the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It 's all right, it 's all true, it all happened. Ha, ha, ha!"

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

"I don't know what day of the month it is!" said Scrooge. "I don't know how long I 've been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I 'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I 'd rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!"

He was checked in his transports by the churches ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, hammer; ding, dong, bell. Bell, dong, ding; hammer, clang, clash! O, glorious, glorious!

Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his head. No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. O, glorious, glorious!

"What 's to-day?" cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loitered in to look about him.

"Eh?" returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.

"What 's to-day, my fine fellow?" said Scrooge.

"To-day!" replied the boy. "Why, CHRISTMAS DAY."

"It 's Christmas Day!" said Scrooge to himself. "I have n't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!"

"Hallo!" returned the boy.

"Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?" Scrooge inquired.

"I should hope I did," replied the lad.

"An intelligent boy!" said Scrooge. "A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they 've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there? — Not the little prize Turkey, the big one?"

"What, the one as big as me?" returned the boy.

"What a delightful boy!" said Scrooge. "It 's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!"

"It 's hanging there now," replied the boy.

"Is it?" said Scrooge. "Go and buy it."

"Walk-ER!" exclaimed the boy.

"No, no," said Scrooge, "I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man, and I 'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I 'll give you half a crown!"

The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand at a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

"I 'll send it to Bob Cratchit's!" whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. "He sha' n't know who sends it. It 's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be!"

The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down stairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer's man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocker caught his eye.

"I shall love it as long as I live!" cried Scrooge, patting it with his hand. "I scarcely ever looked at it before. What an honest expression it has in its face! It 's a wonderful knocker! — Here 's the Turkey. Hallo! Whoop! How are you! Merry Christmas!"

It *was* a Turkey! He never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped 'em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

"Why, it 's impossible to carry that to Camden Town," said Scrooge. "You must have a cab."

The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he

sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried.

Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaster over it, and been quite satisfied.

He dressed himself "all in his best," and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humored fellows said, "Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!" And Scrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman who had walked into his counting-house the day before and said, "Scrooge and Marley's, I believe?" It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear sir," said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his

hands. "How do you do?" I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!"

"Mr. Scrooge?"

"Yes," said Scrooge. "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness — " Here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. "My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?"

"If you please," said Scrooge. "Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favor?"

"My dear sir," said the other, shaking hands with him. "I don't know what to say to such munifi —"

"Don't say anything, please," retorted Scrooge. "Come and see me. Will you come and see me?"

"I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

"Thank 'ee," said Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows; and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed

that any walk — that anything — could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon, he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it.

"Is your master at home, my dear?" said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he, my love?" said Scrooge.

"He 's in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I 'll show you up stairs, if you please."

"Thank 'ee. He knows me," said Scrooge with his hand already on the dining-room lock. "I 'll go in here, my dear."

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous on such points, and like to see that everything is right.

"Fred!" said Scrooge.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started! Scrooge had forgotten, for the moment, about her sitting in the corner with the footstool, or he would n't have done it, on any account.

"Why bless my soul!" cried Fred, "who 's that?"

"It 's I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?"

Let him in! It is a mercy he did n't shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when *he* came. So did the plump sister, when *she* came. So did every one, when *they* came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!

But he was early at the office next morning. O, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo!" growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"

"I am very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I *am* behind my time."

"You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please."

"It 's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob,

appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now, I 'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge; "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again, — "and therefore I am about to raise your salary!"

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat.

"A merry Christmas, Bob!" said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I 'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!"

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the

good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed, and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!

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